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ABSTRACT

Using the situation in West Africa as an example, this paper examines the role and the problems of libraries in developing countries; a problem approach, rather than a country-by-country survey, has been employed. The paper is divided into three major sections: (1) a review of colonial influence, discussing British and French attitudes towards education and libraries and the effect which these attitudes had on the institutions established by the colonial powers in Africa; (2) an examination of the role of the library in the overall development of a country, emphasizing the need for national planning and the integration of library and educational programs; (3) a discussion of the problems facing all types of libraries in West Africa, including staffing, the scarcity of resources, and the need to develop a supportive national bibliographic apparatus. A lengthy bibliography is provided. (Author)

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THE ROLE AND PROBLEMS OF LIBRARIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: THE WEST AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to examine the role and the problems of libraries in developing countries, using the situation in West Africa as a typical example. A problem approach, rather than a country by country survey, has been employed.

The paper may be divided into three major sections. The first deals with the colonial influence, discussing British and French attitudes towards education and libraries and the effect which these attitudes had on the institutions established by the colonial powers in West Africa. The second section concerns the role of the library in the overall development of a country. The need for national planning and the integration of library and educational programs is emphasized. The last major area discusses the problems facing all types of libraries in West Africa; staffing, the scarcity of resources, and the need to develop a supportive national bibliographic apparatus.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

I. DEVELOPING COUNTRIES 4

II. THE COLONIAL PERIOD 7

III. COLONIAL INSTITUTIONS 10

Education - Great Britain 10

Education - France 12

Libraries - Great Britain 13

Libraries - France 17

IV. COLONIAL LEGACY 22

V. THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY IN DEVELOPMENT 28

The Educational Component of Development 28

The Library and Education 31
The library in the university 33
The library in primary and secondary schools 34
The library in adult and continuing education programs and literacy campaigns 36

The Library and Nation-Building 39

VI. LIBRARIES AND THE NEED FOR PLANNING 41

The Value of Planning 41

Organizations for Planning: National Libraries and Library Boards 43

VII. LIBRARY LEGISLATION 46

VIII. STANDARDS FOR LIBRARY SERVICE 50

IX. THE PROBLEM OF STAFFING 52

General Considerations 52

Specific Problems 53
Where and how to train 53
Standards and status 58

Some West African Library Education Programs 60

X. RESOURCES 64

Funding 64

The Legacy of the Oral Tradition 66

The Scarcity of Printed Materials 69
The state of publishing 69
Distribution 76

XI. BIBLIOGRAPHIC APPARATUS 78

XII. THE MOST PRESSING PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL, PUBLIC, AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES 80

CONCLUSION 83

FOOTNOTES 85

BIBLIOGRAPHY 95

INTRODUCTION

Libraries of one sort or another have existed for centuries in many parts of the world. However, it is only since the latter half of the nineteenth century, and only in such places as the United States, Great Britain, Scandinavia, and the USSR, that any meaningful concept of library service has evolved.

The emphasis here is on the word service. Whether it is the scholar or scientist in the special library, the professor or the student in the university, or the senior citizen, autodidact, or inquisitive youngster of the school and public library, libraries and librarians exist to identify and fulfill the need for information. This information may take any number of forms, from the most recent article on thermodynamics to the latest and last Agatha Christie. Books, slides, films, prints: libraries are in the business of giving the patron what he wants, as well as what he may or "ought" to want.

These dual concepts of service and service to all are by no means universally accepted and practiced. In France it is only within the past decade or so that public libraries have come to mean anything more than a dismal room somewhere in the "mairie", ill-stocked with old and rare books. Italy and Spain are even less attuned to the idea of public libraries. The undergraduate in many European countries is still confronted with a library system in which it may be frustrating and difficult to work. Many rural communities in the United States are not served by any sort of library system.

The litany could continue, but the point should be clear. Not all developed countries have developed all their libraries. Some have chosen to emphasize one type of library and, until recently, school libraries were almost universally neglected.

Despite these inadequacies and variations most of the developed countries have long library histories. Although the attitudes toward library service may be changing and expanding, there is always a strong library tradition upon which to build (and against which to butt).

These remarks may appear peripheral to the topic of this paper, the position and problems of libraries in the developing countries of West Africa. That they are not is a matter of some importance.

Lester Asheim, in his Librarianship in the Developing Countries, a work which has served as a "point de repère" for any subsequent discussions, devoted a full third of his slender volume to drawing parallels and contrasting the library situations in the developed and developing countries of the world.[1] This was done for a number of reasons, all of which are applicable to this paper.

In exposing some of the failings of library systems in the more advanced nations Asheim was anticipating the smug and condescending attitude which often surfaces when librarians from developed countries attempt to describe and evaluate the library situation in the newer nations. It was his way of warning analysts not to expect levels of performance which have yet to be achieved in countries which have had libraries for centuries. By comparing the approaches and their varying degrees of success in these modern nations, Asheim firmly established the library as an expression of the values and traditions of the society of which it is a part.

The area covered by this paper is one which has been loosely described as West Africa. It includes fifteen nations, which, with the exception of Liberia, have become independent since 1957. It is an area which was colonized by a number of European nations, principally Portugal, France and Great Britain. The small country of Togo was occupied at one time or another by three colonial powers, France, Great Britain and Germany.

Portuguese influence in West Africa was limited to the area which is now known as Guinea-Bissau. Former British colonies include present day Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and the Gambia. Because of the common language the British have also been very influential in Liberia. However, of these three powers it was France which claimed the lion's share. Her ex-territories are today's Niger, Upper Volta, Benin, Togo, Mali, Mauritania, Ivory Coast, Guinea, and Senegal.

West Africa was chosen for many reasons; perhaps the most important, yet least defensible, being personal preference, a preference based, not on experience or background but rather on a wealth of curiosity. As yet there exists no single monograph on libraries in West Africa. The prospect of research was both challenging and exciting. In addition, the effects of colonization afforded opportunities for numerous comparisons. The two main colonial influences, the French and the British could be contrasted. The conflict between an imposed and an indigenous culture could be considered. The ramifications of all this on possible future regional cooperation could be investigated.

Just as in the developed nations, libraries in the developing countries are in various stages of evolution. Nigeria and Ghana have fairly advanced systems, while Guinea is without even a National Library.[2] This inequality, coupled with a dearth of information on individual countries, particularly Mali, Mauritania, Benin and Guinea, made a country by country approach unfeasible. Accordingly, the paper is organized by problems or broad areas of concern. In the discussion of each problem information on specific countries has been introduced where available. Up-to-date statistical data was often impossible to acquire. Figures used represent the most recent available. As a result, those developing countries with more advanced library systems tend to dominate. This is lamentable, but unavoidable.

I. DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Perhaps the clearest explanation of what is meant by the term developing or emerging country may be provided through a discussion of the essential features of the phenomenon of underdevelopment. Despite vast differences in their climates, populations, and social composition developing countries have certain common characteristics which mark them as such. Some of these attributes are physical and others, economic. However, they are interrelated and create an environment which ultimately, affects the development of library service.

Of these characteristics poor nutrition is the first to come to mind. It is perhaps the most destructive. This situation is, of course, the direct result of low agricultural yields and the inability of these countries to produce adequate and balanced food supplies. Insufficient rainfall, poor soil, and many other climatic and geographic factors explain, but do not rectify this inadequacy.

Malnutrition is just one of the many diseases which plague these countries. They are due to unsanitary conditions, lack of medical assistance and a shortage of medical facilities. The natural corollary is a high infant mortality rate which drastically reduces the average life expectancy.

Good health and vitality are prerequisites for learning. In Upper Volta, those conducting functional literacy programs have discovered that one of the main stumbling blocks to progress is a combination of fatigue, a result of the exhausting nature of most of the villagers' daily routines, and poor health.[3] These factors greatly diminish both the capacity and desire to learn and, in turn, affect library clientele and usage.

In economic terms the most salient characteristic of underdevelopment is a low per capita income. The per capita income in developing countries is generally less than $400.00. Most West African countries are far below even this level. The per capita income in Mali is about $73, in Niger $100, in Benin, Guinea and Togo it is between $125 and $150. Among the former British colonies Ghana fares best at $394 and, of all West Africa, the Ivory Coast, with a per capita income of $600 scores the highest. This compares with an average of $4,500 in developing countries and $7,000 in the U.S.[4]

The economies of developing countries are agricultural rather than industrial and are often "one crop" economies. Senegal is heavily dependent on the groundnut. Ghana relies on cocoa, from which it derives between 60-70% of its foreign exchange earnings.[5] There is usually a limited inflow of capital for development. This restricts industrial expansion and contributes to the high rates of unemployment.

Another factor which impedes industrial development is the absence of an established infrastructure upon which to base expansion. Elements of an infrastructure include transportation systems, schools, and communications. Most developing countries have few roads and railway lines or telephone systems, and unsatisfactory postal service. Such systems are essential for the effective operation of library and information networks.

Until recently educational opportunities were scarce. Illiteracy is rampant. Approximately 10% of the population in Togo is literate, 12% in Mauritania. The figure in Upper Volta drops to between 5-10%. In Mali less than 5% of the population is literate.[6] Obviously, there is not a great amount of native technological and professional expertise available. This has created an inescapable dependence on expatriot manpower that continues to have political and social repercussions.[7]

As Ronald Benge observes in his book Libraries and Cultural Change, some societies do not develop even though they seem to have sufficient resources. He cites the example of Latin America and suggests that one explanation "can be found in the nature of the social structure, and the attitudes of the ruling classes, groups or factions towards relinquishing their privileges for the general welfare."[8]

Recently acquired independence, with the internal complications which accompany it, compounds the problem. In West Africa most of the countries are former colonies. Having been governed by a foreign power for so long, they are just now learning to rule themselves. They must struggle with tribal divisions, linguistic conflicts, and hostility from neighbors who are also experiencing the exhilaration of a new found nationalism.[9]

In Guinea more than fourteen distinct languages are spoken. For centuries it has been divided and ruled by three mutually antagonistic ethnic groups. For Guinea, as for most West African countries "the problem of creating a highly centralized modern nation-state based upon the acceptance of a common nationality is a staggering one."[10]

For Asheim, specifically in terms of libraries, the essential differences between developing countries and a country like the United States are: the almost total absence of public libraries and services to children in developing countries, a national library which is such in name only, publishing no national union catalog or national bibliography, and, a university library which, though closer to a U.S. pattern, is still highly departmentalized and sometimes closed to the undergraduate.[11] He has aptly characterized the difference when he explains that, in most of these libraries, "the book is more important than the reader."[12]

As a result of many factors which will be explored in this paper dissemination has taken a back seat (quite understandably and often justifiably) to preservation as a major role of librarians in the developing countries.

II. THE COLONIAL PERIOD

Although the British had some coastal settlements on the Gold Coast as early as the seventeenth century and the French were established at St. Louis by the eighteenth century, most of West Africa was not formally annexed until after 1850. It was at that time that the partitioning and colonisation of the area was begun in earnest. The process was a gradual one.

The British annexed the settlement of Lagos in 1861, but did not enter the North until 1900. They formally acquired the Gold Coast in 1874 and Sierra Leone was not administered in its entirety until 1896. French expansion was even slower. Faidherbe was appointed governor of Senegal in 1854, but French administration was established in Niger only in 1921 and in 1919 in Togo. Benin became French in 1894 and Upper Volta in 1901.[13]

These differences are worth noting. By the mid 1960s all of these countries had become independent. However, some countries had been governed by a European power for almost twice as many years as their neighbors. Questions of morality and ethics aside, the fact remains that these colonials did build roads, introduce concepts of health and hygiene, and construct educational facilities, including libraries. The longer the European remained in a colony the greater was his impact in these areas.[14] In fact, all but the most extreme anti-colonialists will admit that the degree of enlightenment shown by a colonial power towards its former colony is clearly a factor which has significantly shaped their development.[15]

If the British and French colonised West Africa for the same economic, "humanitarian", religious, and strategic reasons, they did not do so in the same manner. What were the differences in their attitudes and aspirations for their colonies? How did these attitudes influence the type of education and, more particularly, the sort of library structure that they instituted?

The British form of colonialism has been called imperial trusteeship. This took the form of indirect rule whereby the government of a colony would be administered as much as possible through the existing indigenous institutions. It was based upon the assumption that organization and administration could be more effectively accomplished by those **whom** the people knew and trusted, their local chiefs or rulers. Among the colonial powers the British were the first to acknowledge the possibility of some sort of home rule.[16]

The British colonial ruler was generally conservative in thought and behavior. He was often Oxford or Cambridge educated; not terribly brilliant, but possessing leadership qualities and stamina. They were middle-class gentlemen assuming the duties, responsibilities, and social prerogatives of gentlemen. The concepts of paternalism and trusteeship came naturally to them. They were often able to develop sound working relationships with tribal authorities. This situation continued up to the time of the newer African elite and their espousal of "radical democracy and the economics of socialism".[17]

In contrast to the British policy of indirect rule, which sought to prepare the colonies for ultimate self-government and independence, the French pursued a policy of assimilation. The French "had as their goal, however distant, the cultural and political integration of their colonial peoples."[18]

The doctrine of assimilation is based on two seemingly conflicting ideas; the equality of man and the superiority of European or, more specifically, French civilization. The French felt that it was their "mission civilatrice" to convert the African into the Frenchman.

This doctrine implied a "fundamental acceptance" of the African's "potential human equality, but a total dismissal of African culture as of any value."[19] Direct rule is the necessary adjunct of assimilation, but in practice this was often modified. The size of the territories and their inaccessibility required local assistance for administration.

The British colonial, imbued with the traditions of the gentry was, if not appreciative, at least not contemptuous of African rulers and cultures. Not so his French counterpart.

The typical French colonialist was from a lower-middle class background, often poorly educated. Frequently he was in Africa as a result of his inability to make a living in France.[20] His belief in the superiority of French culture fostered in him a disdain of things African.

Even between the world wars, when attitudes towards colonialism were changing and both France and Great Britain began to question the value and purpose of imperialism, France softened but did not abandon her assimilationist stance. Attempts to modify this stance, the development of a policy of association, were somewhat successful in the economic sphere though not generally in regards to cultural affairs. The establishment of L'Institut Français de l'Afrique Noire (IFAN) stimulated interest in African culture, but never wholly replaced the assimilationist attitude.[21]

III. COLONIAL INSTITUTIONS

EDUCATION-GREAT BRITAIN

Originally, throughout West Africa, education was the responsibility of the missionaries. Neither the French nor the British expected to create a system of education which was universal and national. They were merely interested in producing a limited number of potential employees to execute and perpetuate colonialism.[22] To accomplish this it was necessary to provide a general rudimentary program, with the teaching of French or English as its primary function. In the broadest sense all colonials were wary of providing too much education, as it might sow the seeds and supply the "weapons" of revolution. The missionary origins, a tendency to service only those parts of the population which occupied the coastal regions and towns, and the institution of general rather than vocational programs were common to both colonial powers. However, in time, education became another manifestation of their different colonial aspirations.

Prior to WW I Great Britain expressed very little interest in education for her colonies. In Sierra Leone education was administered only indirectly by the government. In order to receive government assistance the mission schools had to meet certain teaching, building standards etc. It was only in the postwar period that government control was extended over education, and a more coherent system began to appear.[23] The same pattern occurred in Gambia. There the government did not take any real interest in education until 1937 when the first Board of Education was created.[24] Vocational training in industrial and agricultural skills remained neglected.

Government interest was aroused earlier, but the evolution of education in Ghana followed much the same course. The rate of educational growth prior to WW II was steady but unspectacular. Then there was a massive spurt in efforts in education and between 1945 and 1950 gross educational enrollments almost doubled. In 1951 the government initiated its Accelerated Development Plan for Education which advocated "a measure of education for every child of school-going age."[25] One could suggest a corollary between this growing concern for education and the British realization of the inevitability of home rule or independence and the need to prepare for it.

British educational policies might be characterized as more pragmatic and devolutionary than the French. Each colony was allowed to formulate its own educational policy. Aspects of local life and African culture which did not conflict with British values could be stressed.[26] In Ghana, as early as 1925, primary education in the vernacular was advocated.[27] Anglicization occurred only at the higher levels of learning. The responsibility for establishing schools resided with the local authorities who received grants-in-aid from the central government. The number of schools totally supported and administered by the central government was relatively small. This is still true today.[28]

Eventually, the British established technical schools. By 1940 Ghana had six teacher training colleges and, later on, one university which specialized in science and technology.[29]

The British colonial pattern of instruction tended to be formal in method and placed a considerable premium on rote learning at all levels. This approach was adopted because of the exigencies of the examination system and the low standards of teacher training.[30] There is a direct relationship between this form of instruction and the need felt for libraries as sources of alternative and supplementary materials.

Lastly, the British educational policy did not seek to groom and educate an elite African ruling class. "There was already a ruling class in existence- the chiefs on whom the British relied in accordance with the doctrine of indirect rule."[31]

EDUCATION-FRANCE

Like the British, the French role in education developed in a piecemeal and desultory fashion. "Up until WW I annual enrollment had never passed 2.35% of the total school-age population."[32] However, in contrast to the British, whose attitudes towards education for the colonies changed as their awareness of the colonial situation changed, the French, until the last, did not deviate significantly from their initial approach.

The educational system was patterned on a French model. The standards were roughly the same as those expected of French children at equivalent levels in France. The process is essentially one of elimination whereby all but the best students are weeded out, enabling the system to produce a very small, elite intelligentsia. It was a highly centralized system which required no local initiative. It was centrally administered and regulated; the obvious method for pursuing a policy of assimilation in which education concentrated on creating a small Gallicized elite.

Besides evolving slowly, educational facilities in French West Africa were severely restricted geographically. Activities centered in Senegal. Compared to its endeavors in the other territories, France could be said to have made a major effort in Senegal. Nevertheless, only a small percentage of the school-age population actually attended school. Those who did "were educated according to French methods with few concessions made to local factors."[33]

Niger was perhaps the least educationally developed of the territories.[34] In Mauritania the French established some schools in the Senegal River Valley during the 1920s. This valley was inhabited by minority groups. Because of their mobility and initial rejection of Western education, few schools were provided for the region's largest ethnic group, the nomadic Moors.[35] This pattern of Moslem resistance to Western education occurred throughout West Africa.

Despite the death-blow dealt colonialism by the Second World War, France continued to affirm its "mission civilatrice". Even if the Brazzaville Conference of 1944 proposed to give the population at large the basic education necessary for "responsible citizenship in Westernized society" it still "called for the establishment in the overseas territories of an educational system modeled closely after that existing in metropolitan France."[36]

It was not until 1956 that, "the loi-cadre transferred the responsibility for primary school education in French administered West Africa to the African governments of the individual territories."[37] Even so, the French never abandoned the belief that it was their obligation to spread their language and culture in order to create "not just educated Africans, but educated French Africans."[38]

The University of Dakar, which evolved during the 1950s was the first French attempt to provide for higher education in Africa. As a result of their desire to train an elite, there was little done to educate the masses. Although the British did not provide universal education, they undoubtedly scored higher than the French. By 1950 the British had universities in three of its four colonies.[39]

LIBRARIES-GREAT BRITAIN

As early as 1850 the British Parliament passed public library legislation. The Ewart Bill, as it was called in honor of its initiator, enabled communities, municipalities and boroughs of over 10,000 inhabitants to establish, on their own initiative, public libraries.[40] This was to be accomplished through the levying of a special tax called the penny-rate. Even Morel is quick to admit that "La bill Ewart n'a pas porte ses fruits de suite"[41] but a first step had been taken. Further legislation followed, culminating in the Public Libraries Act of 1892. This act provided that every urban district and parish in England and Wales should be designated a library district. By the end of the nineteenth century Morel maintains "que l'Angleterre peut dire: nos villes ont des bibliothèques."[42]

As in the United States, special emphasis was placed on adult education. Services for children were provided. Newspapers, periodicals and books of current interest were considered within the library's domain.

Although Great Britain was slow to export its brand of library service to its colonies, it is significant that well-organized public library systems are in operation in only a few African countries. Notable among these are Ghana and Nigeria, both former British colonies. Of equal significance is the fact that, in those British teritories where there was any library service, it was public libraries, and not university or special libraries, which were the first to be developed.

In Accra in 1928, the once-private collection of Bishop Aglioby was opened to the general public. Initially, the British Council furnished accomodations and staff.[43] This collection formed the basis for the country's public library service.

The British Council began library service in Ghana in 1945. At that time two decisions were made which were to have a lasting effect on library development in Ghana.

Firstly, service was to extend throughout the country. This was felt to be preferable to the establishment of a pilot scheme in one locality, no matter how efficient. Secondly, buildings would take a backseat to book distribution, and this distribution would be in direct response to local, territorial demands. Both of these decisions represent fundamental British attitudes towards library service: that service should be available to all, equally, and, that such service should arise from local demands.

Service was begun in earnest in 1950 when the Library Board of the Gold Coast was instituted. It began by undertaking an extensive survey of local needs which resulted in the initiation of a mobile library service and a book box service administered from a central headquarters at Accra. The Board's motto, "Books to the People" says much about their idea of library service.

The Board was determined not to open libraries unless suitably trained staff were available to manage them. In fact, the first specifically constructed library building did not appear until 1953 when the regional library in Kumasi was opened.[44]

Loosely following the British pattern, with its National Lending Library (then the National Central Library) which acts as a center for bibliographic information and as central lending agency,[45] the Board sought to centralize certain technical services as well as the overall administration of the system. The British acknowledgedthe importance of local interest for the initiation and continued support necessary for successful library service but they also realized that the responsibility for public libraries should rest with the central government. This made library development a national and nationwide concern and has been seen as the primary reason for the rapid growth and expansion of public library services in Ghana.[46]

The Board sought to provide uniform service throughout the country, avoid duplication of effort, and centralize book purchasing, classification and cataloging. Local administrations contributed what little they could in order to create local support for the service. These localities might furnish the building, while the central government, through the Board, took care of books, staff and other ancillary services.

The importance of high national interest and involvement cannot be overstressed. Ghana had little financial assistance from outside agencies. There was some aid from the Carnegie Corporation which was earmarked for the development of training programs. Neither UNESCO nor the British Council was called upon for help. Ms. Evans even believes that "this complete internal self-help and interest is probably one of the reasons that has made the whole project a success."[47]

The British policy of indirect rule allowed for the existence of a strong central government with a great deal of autonomy. This autonomy permitted the governments of the individual colonies to respond to local needs and situations. Initiative and innovation (within reason) were sanctioned. The establishment of a public library system in Ghana was one positive result of this approach.

Library development in Nigeria did not receive as much support from its colonial government. Nor was the British government prepared to supply financial aid. Even a report of the Carnegie Corporation could not convince them that expenditures were warranted.[48]

As a result, library development in Nigeria, though considerable, has been uneven. The Carnegie Corporation played a major role by subsidizing projects, financing investigations and surveys, and fathering a school of librarianship. At Enugu a regional pilot project, modeled after Ghana's system was begun in 1957-1958 with aid from UNESCO and the British Council.

Working within the colonial system, both Ghana and Nigeria managed to initiate good public library service. This was not true of all the former colonies. As of 1959 Sierra Leone had only a few libraries, mostly supported by the British Council. In Gambia there were no libraries other than the British Council library at Bathurst.[49] The British system allowed, and occasionally participated in developing library service. However, there was little active encouragement and no overall plan for public library development in West Africa.

University library development in English-speaking West Africa began in 1948 with the establishment of university colleges at Legon, Ghana and Ibadan, Nigeria. Development may have been spurred by the findings of the 1945 Elliot Commission on Higher Education in West Africa. This commission revealed the poverty of existing educational library facilities and emphasized the need for an adequate library in the university which had been proposed for Ibadan.[50] University libraries now exist in all of the former British colonies in West Africa.

In Ghana the university libraries were open-access, only special collections having certain restrictions. Some libraries charged fines but no deposits were required of entitled users. In general, these libraries are efficiently administered and attractively housed. Their collections reflect the research needs of both the faculty and student body. As Asheim points out, foreign university libraries, in this case those of the former British colonies, are often much like ours in the United States.

LIBRARIES-FRANCE

In contrast to Great Britain, "où la tradition de la bibliothèque-service public est solidement enracinée"[51] France is virtually without a history of public libraries as they are commonly known.

Scholarly private and university libraries have existed for centuries in France. It was the Revolution which introduced the concept of the public library by confiscating private libraries of great wealth and distributing their volumes to the municipalities throughout France. Much of this material was either rare, esoteric or simply fragile. These "anciens fonds" were of scholarly interest rather than something appropriate for the general public. As a result "these stocks, though nominally public, became in fact preserves of a cultivated elite."[52]

After this initial gift the government made no provisions for expansion and collection development. Funds were not made available, nor was there any attempt to make the "public" library a place in which the average citizen could relax, read a local newspaper, browse among well-stocked shelves, and find a work of interest, whether fictional or not. In time, "France came to have a system of municipal libraries whose main purpose was one of conservation and preservation."[53]

Increasingly, the development of public libraries in France lagged behind many advanced countries. Days and hours of service were limited and this further restricted use by the general public. Children's services were rare. Even as late as 1966 an article on the state of libraries remarked "il n'y a presque pas de bibliothèques enfantines en France."[54]

There was no real library school in France before 1964. At that time the Ecole Nationale Superieure de Bibliothècaires was founded. Prior to this there was only the Ecole de Chartres, which was concerned primarily with the training of paleographers and documentalists. Training for librarians as we know it was practically non-existent. "In France the distinction between library service to a 'grand public' and a scholarly elite became much more formally and rigidly separated than in the United States and Great Britain."[55]

Due to the slow development of public libraries the activities of various private organizations have assumed great importance. The Action Catholique Générale Féminine has its program Bibliothèques pour Tous, which has a network of libraries modeled after the American system of public libraries and branches. Private industries have their own company libraries, those at Renault being among the best endowed and organized. Government agencies and nationalized industry have their own libraries. The PTT had 110 libraries in 1972, and the SNCF had 400 service points.[56]

Even the Bibliothèque de Clamart, which has served as the model for French children's libraries, was founded through the efforts of "La Joie par les livres", a private enterprise, organized in 1963 specifically for the purpose of encouraging the development of children's libraries.[57]

Events of recent years have drastically altered the face of French librarianship. Library service is no longer exclusively concerned with the scholar. "Bibliobuses" and regional libraries are bringing books to communities which never had real library facilities. The success of the company libraries has proven that "plus est proche et accessible le livre, plus facilement et frequemment il est lu."[58] Gradually library usage is becoming a part of French life.

Having inherited such a tradition it is hardly surprising that library development in French West Africa was, until recently, minimal. Public library development came later than in most of British West Africa. In fact, most advances have been made since independence in 1960, yet public libraries are still in the first stages of growth.

Significantly, in light of the French pattern of interest by private organizations in library development, the earliest libraries existing in French West Africa were special libraries. It is equally interesting to note that the second most important initiative was at the university level.

At the time of independence the library situation was more or less the same in all these countries, with the exception, perhaps, of Senegal. Each of them had a large territorial library which "had originated as the administrative library of the local government of the colonial power."[59]

The management of these libraries had been entrusted, during the 1940s to an organization called Institut Francais d'Afrique Noire (IFAN, now Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire). They became, in effect, local annexes of IFAN, which had its central headquarters at Dakar.

IFAN was founded in the 1930s by the Afrique l'ouest français government and ceased to exist at the time of independence; its branches reverting to the new governments of the former territories. In Senegal IFAN (same initialism, new meaning) is attached to the University of Dakar. Then as now IFAN carries out research in both the natural and human sciences in Africa including prehistory, history, linguistics, sociology, islamic studies and social psychology.[60]

The IFAN libraries acted as research centers and kept local archives. In principal they were open to all but in actuality they were seldom used except by researchers or, occasionally, by students. They were often "badly located, torn between the needs of research and those of the reading public, and, above all, paralysed by lack of funds."[61] Like the collections of the municipal libraries of the metropole they offered little that was within the interest or capability of the local community.

In spite of these drawbacks it is an undeniable fact that these IFAN libraries, by their very presence, increased awareness of the need for libraries and encouraged their development. Until the university program began in 1963 the library of IFAN at Dakar was the principal center for training librarians in French-speaking West Africa. In 1962 the IFAN centers served as the main library in both Benin and Niger.[62]

Long after independence these IFAN libraries continue to play a dominant role in many countries. Some became the basis for a national archive or documentation center while others, in Togo and the Ivory Coast for example, served as the first step (sometimes built upon, sometimes left as it is) towards a national library.

Another organization which has made some inroads for libraries in French-speaking West Africa is called Association Internationale pour le Developpement des Bibliothèques Africaines (AIDBA). It was founded at St. Louis, Senegal in 1957. Its aim was the establishment of three types of libraries in each African state; a national depository library, a national network of public and school libraries, and reference libraries for universities, institutes and laboratories. AIDBA sought to promote, in both the government and the private sector, a fuller appreciation of the importance of libraries in national life. National branches were established in Togo, Senegal, and Mauritania. The AIDBA branches are still active and in Togo and Mauritania constitute the only national library associations.

As in France, library service centered in the capitals. This is inevitable. It occurred in the British territories as well. The chief distinction was that the British, though slow to begin in Africa, had a tradition of rural library service at home. The French, with their strong tendency towards centralization, did not. Mobile libraries were in use in Ghana nationwide in 1950. In Senegal in 1959 a "bibliothèque circulante" was organized for the purpose of changing school collections. Its operations were limited to the region in and around Dakar.

During 1950 the French established an Institute of Higher Studies at Dakar. In keeping with their assimilationist policies the courses, both their content and presentation, were modeled on the French system. The school became a full university in 1957. The library has grown steadily and as of 1972 constituted the second largest university collection in all of French-speaking Africa.[63] It was constructed with French aid and originally modeled on the French university library which is organized into departments by faculty. In 1966 a large central library was built which, though organized into various "salle" by discipline, does bring all library materials together under one roof.

IV. COLONIAL LEGACY

> Sans l'analyse du passé, il n'est pas possible de prétendre apprécier les anachronismes du présent, ni, à plus forte raison, de jeter les bases d'une prospective.
>
> P. Legendre Histoire de l'Administration de 1750 à nos Jours.

Colonialism, like all important political and historical events, has left its mark. Because of the nature of colonialism it is predominantly those colonized, rather than those colonizing, who are most radically altered and affected by the experience. In terms of education and, specifically, libraries, what was the colonial legacy in West Africa?

Before discussing the situation and any shortcomings or problems which have resulted from the imposition of foreign systems with little adaptation for local needs, one point must be stressed: prior to the colonial invasion there were virtually no schools and certainly no libraries in West Africa. Aside from those areas which had a Moslem culture such concepts as reading and books were unknown. This does not excuse the colonial impulse. However, perhaps not all of its effects were negative.

The disparity between the level of public service in the English-speaking countries and those of former French West Africa is perhaps the most striking example of colonial influence. This disparity can, in part, be explained by the situation of public libraries in the colonizing countries themselves. As we saw earlier, their traditions varied considerably. Figures show that throughout the entire colonial period France spent, on her libraries in the metropole, approximately one-half of what the British spent on their libraries in England.[64]

It is interesting to note that at the time of the Enugu Seminar in 1962 no former French colony had more than 0.01 book per inhabitant and, more importantly, "none seemed prepared to allocate to libraries the funds necessary to create real services of the same level as those in Ghana and Eastern Nigeria..."[65]

And the trend continues. As of 1971 there were twice as many public libraries in Great Britain as in France. In the same year Sierra Leone, a country with one-half the wealth of the Ivory Coast, spent three times as much on libraries.[66]

Throughout the colonial period there were no real public libraries in Niger. The first public library which was constructed in the capital city of Niamey was not opened until 1962-63- after independence.[67]

Generally, those countries which have been under British and, eventually, American influence are uninhibited in the development of their library and educational systems. In contrast, those countries which had a colonial experience under a continental power are narrower in their outlooks and have attitudes "which seem to owe much to medieval scholasticism."[68]

Following the example of the Americans the British modified their method of teaching to conform to the nature of knowledge and education in the twentieth century. Libraries came to have a bigger role in education as a means of supplementing and enriching the learning process. It is only recently that the French have begun to question their traditional approach to education. "Les méthodes traditionnelles sont mises durement en cause, la pédagogie s'exprime en concepts nouveaux: auto-formation, auto-documentation, qui semblent devoir modifier profondément la place du livre et de la bibliothèque dans l'enseignement."[69]

While the British may have adopted new methods of instruction and made some adjustments for the local situation, course content remained basically as it was in Great Britain. The inappropriateness of much of the subject matter and emphasis of colonial educational systems is even today a problem. The same is true in French West Africa. In 1974 Togo instituted an Authenticity Campaign which had as its goal the eradication of the vestiges of colonialism by emphasizing African rather than French culture in the schools. Some of the anglophone countries have retained outmoded teaching methods long after their complete revision in Great Britain.[70] This was, until recently, especially true of teacher-training programs.

The fact that colonial development occurred primarily in a few important urban centers has had serious repercussions. The British policy of indirect rule which emphasized the insularity of regions tended to aggravate disparities in the diffusion of education. For example, the encouraging statistic that, in 1948, 5.9% of the Gold Coast had received six years of education is undermined since this actually represented 3.9% in Ashanti alone, and only 0.21% in the Northern Territories.[71] In French West Africa the geographical distribution of schools was equally poor. In Senegal almost all were located on the coast or less than fifty miles to the east, leaving the interior without institutions which offered a complete general secondary education. In 1969 in Dakar, 75% of school-age children were attending school. The figure was only 14% for eastern Senegal. Standards of education are equally varied.[72]

As a result of the French efforts in Mauritania mentioned earlier, the minority groups were educated but the nomadic majority was not. These minorities have assumed a disproportionate number of prestigious positions in education and the civil service. The tension thus created is a problem today. Benin still has no national university.

Neither the British nor the French made any systematic provisions for the education of librarians in West Africa.

It was the government of Ghana which founded the Ghana Library School in 1961. The Institute of Librarianship at Ibadan was begun in 1960 with grants from the Carnegie Corporation. The Ecole des Bibliothecaires, Archivistes et Documentalists at Dakar originated as a UNESCO/ Senegal sponsored project. This failure to provide facilities to train librarians has seriously impeded library development and will be discussed in detail in the section on library education.

Perhaps because of its slow start the British influence on library education in West Africa was short-lived. For the most part it has been replaced by a system of professional training which is similar to the American pattern. However, in the French-speaking countries the example and presence of the former colonial power is still a force in library education.[73]

The differences in colonial attitudes towards librarians had their counterparts in West Africa. At the Enugu Seminar many of the librarians from the French-speaking nations were amazed to see the respect accorded the profession in other cultures. They discovered that librarians, instead of being inferior clerks relegated to musty buildings, could be important and highly esteemed people who had received university training and were directing nation-wide services.[74]

Another development of colonialism which has had many ramifications (and which will be explored fully) is the use of a foreign language as the medium for instruction and reading. One may argue that a lingua franca is a necessary evil for a continent which conservative estimates maintain has 600 different languages. However, it is the imposition coupled with the failure to recognize and allow for the inevitable complications which follow that may be criticized. At one time in Senegal it was difficult to find a West African qualified to serve as an editor for a radio program in the vernacular. Those who were sufficiently educated to perform the task were also assimilated to the degree that they were incapable of expressing themselves in a manner which would be agreeable to their listeners.[75]

Just as we saw that the French had no real tradition of public libraries neither did they have much of a history of library legislation. Such legislation was common to the British experience. This pattern was carried over into the colonies. The English territories did much more in this respect.

Ghana had the first ordinance concerning libraries in 1950. The Eastern Region of Nigeria adopted legislation in 1955, and Sierra Leone followed in 1959. Certain French-speaking colonies issued decrees in connection with libraries, but these have generally been more in the nature of rules and regulations or statements of intention, rather than actual provision under law for library development.[76]

The correlation between legislation and development will be discussed.

Accidents of time and tradition were responsible for what is perhaps the most subtle but substantive legacy of colonialism; their view of the library as a "comparatively late and sophisticated development in a culture" which must come "after a reading public and a system of publishing have been created."[77] Until recently this has been a universally held assumption. Library development in West Africa may have been seriously impeded by the failure to question the appropriateness of this assumption in a developing country. This, in turn, has resulted in the failure to integrate and exploit libraries in school programs, adult education and literacy campaigns. The waste thus created has been costly.

The de-colonization process is a long and painful one. By instilling in the African a respect for education and an appreciation of the book as a tool for learning, the colonials provided a very powerful instrumentality for the successful completion of this process. As one Nigerian librarian has said "... the major element in the de-colonization process becomes the battle for the minds of men. Put this way , it is becoming clear that the library, the repository of ideas as contained in books and tapings, has a part to play."[78]

V. THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY IN DEVELOPMENT

THE EDUCATIONAL COMPONENT OF DEVELOPMENT

> To support economic growth, without simultaneously planning for appropriate human development, is to undermine and limit seriously the potential return from all other government expenditure.
>
> Kalu Okorie in Standards of Practice for West African Libraries.

Today the obvious truth of this statement strikes the reader as readily apparent, even commonsensical. Yet it was not until the 1950s, with the work of such men as Simon Kuznets and Wassily Leontief, that modern economics came to realize the importance of the human ingredient in development. Prior to this time economics had neglected to treat human resources explicitly "as a form of capital, as a produced means of production, as a product of investment."[79] Economists had failed to consider that such factors as education, non-profit research, health and recreation contribute to economic growth by increasing the efficiency of individuals, hence all production systems. This new realization has brought education clearly into the mainstream of economic analysis.[80]

Education is now seen as one essential means of achieving the national goals set by the new African nations; national unity, economic growth, and social justice.

National unity requires a national identity. Schools are seen as a means for disseminating the concept of nationhood, its values and exigencies. We now understand that economic growth is directly related to the ability of a school system or educational program to implant new attitudes and skills in the population. The equality of opportunity which education fosters is an important step towards ensuring social justice.[81]

Unfortunately the developing countries have learned that simply to provide education is not enough and may be, ultimately, a stumbling block to development. It is necessary to ask what kind of education, for whom, and how is it to be provided? In short, it is necessary to integrate education into the overall national needs and aspirations.

As we learned earlier the countries of West Africa inherited from their colonizers systems of education. These systems were formulated to meet the needs of Great Britain and France. They were designed to impart general skills; reading, writing, basic arithmetic, language skills, etc, with little attempt at vocational training. They were imposed arbitrarily without regard to the special problems of development. In addition, the method of instruction and systems of examinations tended to groom exclusive groups rather than encourage general educational advancement. As a result, many of the new nations have discovered that the skills brought into being through formal education cannot be effectively harnessed to development processes.

In the early 1970s in Mauritania educational reform was introduced which was "designed to Arabicize and Mauritanize existing institutions, emphasizing the technical and professional training that is vital for national development."[82]

The possibility of advancement and the social status which education once conferred, particularly in French West Africa, contribute to the perpetuation of a system which may no longer be in the national interest. The average level of education among the unemployed seems to be rising. The growing investment in education is increasingly an investment in idle human resources. The economies of these countries are simply unable to absorb their newly educated.[83]

Recognition of the need for education and willingness to support educational programs are common to all of West

Africa. Almost every country has some sort of compulsory education law.[84] Although the absence of facilities in many areas renders such laws inoperative, their nationalistic value cannot be denied.

A substantial portion of many national budgets and development plans are devoted to education. In Niger in 1975, 20% of the national budget was spent on education. Mali invested 4% of its total GNP in 1976 and in 1974 Togo allocated 22.6% of its national budget.[85] Percentage-wise these figures compare well with percentages of national budgets in developed countries. In 1974 the United States allotted 21.1%, France set aside 24.1% and Germany, only 14.4%.[86] Of course in real terms there is no comparison. It is the intention which is admirable.

Investments of this magnitude in countries which have severely restricted resources attests to a considerable effort. Increasingly the West African countries are scrutinizing these investments. They have begun to question their traditional approach to education and to realize the waste that their inherited educational systems have created.

Several suggestions have been made. Experts feel that education should become less formal, less centralized. It should be experimental and flexible in order to adapt to particular local conditions. Innovative and imaginative means outside the formal school system should be developed for the dissemination of information. At the 1976 Conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States in Lagos, Nigeria, it was unanimously agreed that every state must "use each mode of delivery where it can discharge an educational function most effectively, mobilizing and redeploying educational resources for greater efficiency."[87]

This is precisely what a good library system will do.

THE LIBRARY AND EDUCATION

> A well planned library system, integrated in the national educational plans and, hence, in the economic and social development plans, is a guarantee that the money invested in education and research will pay reasonable dividends: Accordingly, expenditure on library services should be regarded, like those on education, as a capital investment rather than a mere item of consumption expenditure.
>
> Carlos Victor Penna.
> "Planning Library Services"
> UNESCO Bull. for Libraries

This long passage has been quoted in full because in it Penna makes three very important statements about the role of the library in development. Firstly, library systems must be planned on a national scale and integrated into the general program for national development. Secondly, libraries are a means of ensuring that investments in education yield anticipated returns. Thirdly, because libraries are essential for the success of educational programs they should be a high priority item in every national budget.

The logic of this argument seems irrefutable yet how often is the reality otherwise! Many West African nations spend twenty percent of their national budgets on education, but libraries are often not included under this category. The 1970-1974 National Development Plan for Nigeria listed education as its second highest item, allotting it 13.5% of the total national budget. Public libraries were dealt with under Information which, with Social Services, received a scant 1.1% of available funds.[88] Primary school libraries fared better. They were included in the educational budget and, happily, 0.7 million pounds or 9% of this budget, was designated for their development.[89]

Liberia provides another example. At present, millions of dollars are being spent on education; more schools, more trained teachers, new curricula, but little for public or school libraries. In fact, "hardly any money is earmarked for library service in Liberia's annual budget on education."[90]

In 1968 Ms. Isnard, in discussing African national investment in education noted that for seven years of instruction it cost the West African state between $400-800. She concluded that it would be worthwhile for countries to invest in a library system which would help keep the student literate; "there are few other national expenditures of such a modest amount which ultimately prove so profitable."[91]

It is essential that governments realize that library services cover both economic and social services and, therefore, cannot simply be regarded as an appendage of information services.

As a result of this unfortunate situation it is often said that libraries are a low priority in developing countries. Herman Liebaers is quick to add that "in fact, the same applies to the industrialized countries but its effects are less apperent."[92] Libraries in developed nations may receive the same low percentage of their national budget but in real terms this is, nevertheless, a substantial sum.

In developing countries, where resources are scarce and those vying for a share are legion, the librarian must be strident in presenting his case. "All his technical ability will be in vain unless he succeeds in establishing a satisfactory dialogue with the local and national authorities regarding the value of libraries in economic and social development."[93]

These librarians realize that the success of library development has two major pre-conditions; support from those who supply the funds and formulate the laws to encourage library growth, and acceptance, on the part of those who will use these services, of the value of libraries for improving their daily lives. The colonial view of libraries as a capstone of a sophisticated society must be supplanted by a new understanding of the role of libraries in development. This was realized early on in Ghana and the success of its system may be attributed, in part, to this awareness.

Educators often blame "socio-economic" factors for drop-outs, and regression but Penna feels that this is also due to an "educational system which does not use libraries as a working element."[94] He believes that they are essential because they consolidate education, teach students to teach themselves, and open to the student a world of knowledge not restricted to the lecture hall. He sees them as the "backbone" of an educational system without which primary schools, adult educational programs and literacy campaigns could make few lasting inroads.

Let us now consider the role of the library in specific educational efforts.

THE LIBRARY IN THE UNIVERSITY

The indispensable presence of the library in the university is a widely accepted fact. Its full exploitation by the entire university community, students and faculty alike, is a newer phenomenon, due largely to the recent evolution in attitudes towards education and methods of instruction.

West Africa, which has had some rather modern university libraries for over a decade, has experienced this revolution too. Their view of the role of the library as the supportive center for research in the university corresponds to the view held by most of the developed countries.

They recognize the responsibility of the library to enhance the curriculum, but they do not see the collection as bounded by course offerings. Serials are avidly collected from the desire to prevent parochialism by keeping the African informed of world affairs and international intellectual developments. The fact that the university library may be the only place in the country where such information is available makes its function even more important. Resource sharing through interlibrary loan is especially necessary in such a situation. Reference services are provided.

In addition to its role as research center, university librarians are aware of the physical service that their facilities provide. Many students have no suitable place to work other than the library. Often the library is the only place where a student can find a desk and comfortable chair. The library has adequate lighting and may even be air-conditioned. In a tropical climate the presence of air-conditioning can do much to increase a student's intellectual productivity.

The scarcity of materials outside the university due to the poor state of the book trade in West Africa, plus the inability of the majority of students to afford their own materials, reinforce the role of the university library as a valuable national resource.

THE LIBRARY IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Just as the value of the university library has been readily accepted everywhere, no country will deny the importance of the library at the secondary and primary school levels. However, the fact remains that these libraries are generally the last and least developed. West Africa is no exception. Commenting on this tendency a Nigerian librarian rightly observed, "so far only lip service has been paid to the provision of libraries in schools in most developing countries."[95]

The well-stocked school library supports and enriches the curriculum. It contributes to the total development of the user by enlarging his horizons and stimulating his critical and imaginative faculties. This kind of self-discovery is extremely important in the formative years.

The difficulties of learning a second language can be lessened to some extent by the provision of a varied and interesting book selection from which to choose. This is also true for those first learning to read, whether in mother tongue or in a foreign language. If a child has exhausted the resources available to him he will quickly lose interest in reading and, almost as quickly, lose the ability.

For those who go on to the university, familiarity with the structure and organization of a library and skill in its use are valuable assets. Those who do not go beyond the primary level but have learned to use a library, have the wherewithal to continue on their own.

The very presence of libraries in schools can offset the West African custom of reading exclusively for exams. The student need not read fiction, a habit that Africans in general have not been eager to acquire; the library should supply all types of reading material.

A UNESCO pilot school library project, which was established in the Federal Territory of Lagos and supported by a Central Textbook Library, performed a number of useful services. Besides building up the schools' basic reference collections and establishing a lending library, the program supplied non-book instructional aids such as slides, films and filmstrips. Special request services and a mobile library service were introduced.[96]

Often in rural areas where literacy is limited, public libraries have yet to be constructed, and bookstores are nonexistent, book distribution can be accomplished through the school library. In those areas where the school is the only cultural institution "the school library should be planned as a cultural center for the whole community."[97]

Gradually, awareness of the contributions that school libraries can make is spreading. As we saw earlier, Nigeria has invested a considerable amount in their development. But this is an isolated instance and support, particularly, in the former French colonies, is sadly lacking. A university library which costs millions is seen as a real prestige item, while the value of the school library in the bush remains underestimated.

THE LIBRARY IN ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND LITERACY CAMPAIGNS

> Enseigner à lire et à écrire n'est qu'un engagement pris, pour fournir de bons livres ceux qui auront reçu ces leçons préliminaires. Les abandonner après ce premier présent, c'est avoir en quelque sorte, fait un présent inutile.
>
> Maurice Pellison.
> *Les Bibliothèques Populaires en France et a l'Etranger*

Investment in formal education is necessary for training the future leaders and manpower of a nation. But what about those who were born too early to profit from the recent expansion of education? These adults are already functioning in the economy yet, because they cannot read or do not know basic arithmetic they are not performing at full capacity. When such illiterates exist in large enough numbers in an economy they hamper technological and economic advancement. For developing countries educational programs for neo-literates and adult non-literates contribute to the fuller exploitation of their human resources.

A public library, which is open to all at little or no charge should serve as a focal point for the various informal educational programs. This point was made at Ibadan in 1954. In their policy statement, seminar members stressed the importance of the public library for the new literates who"need continued access to suitable publications, stimulation of their reading interests and expert reading guidance to sharpen their new skill into an effective instrument of self-education."[98] They recognized that public libraries are essential for the success of mass education and vice versa.

Because a public library serves the entire community it is a natural source of information on the reading interests of the area. Through systematic research into the information needs and motivations of its users the public library can work with the literacy committees and education ministries to determine what kinds of materials will be most effective for educational purposes.

Working in conjunction with literature bureaus, public libraries can conduct writing seminars or workshops to stimulate local authorship. This is particularly useful because of the dearth of reading materials in vernacular languages. By instructing new authors on procedures for submitting manuscripts and assisting them in locating willing publishers, libraries encourage the development of a national literature. In turn, this material has an appeal for the African (which foreign literature may not) and so fosters a reading habit which increases library usage.

For those who are administering and executing educational programs the public library represents a resource of instructional material in both book and non-book forms. Such materials can supplement the learning experience as well as reinforce the instructor's background.

Through exhibits, book clubs or reading circles, and book weeks and fairs the library can whet the public appetite for books. Although the 1976 Ife Book Fair, whose aim was to "emphasize the important role the printed word has to play in the development of education and advancement in Africa,"[99] was organized by the university library, there is no reason why a large public or national library could not undertake the task.

Traditionally, literacy has been narrowly defined as the ability to read and write. Developed countries view this ability as a first step in education. In many developing countries these basic skills are all the government or economy can furnish. Learned in a vacuum, or in a general program in the colonial manner, these skills served little purpose and were usually quickly forgotten. The few libraries which existed did not have collections suited to the needs of the neo-literate or adapted to the African experience.

Reading Dickens can be a formidable task for a young American who speaks English as his native tongue!

Accordingly, developing nations have re-evaluated their approach to literacy. The concept of functional literacy slowly evolved. Functional literacy classes are still interested in imparting the basic skills but the subject matter and concerns of the courses are directly related to the peoples' daily lives. This is done in order to improve living conditions and, ultimately, increase productivity.

The information supplied is on subjects of practical interest; health, hygiene, agriculture, civics, nutrition, etc. The courses are conducted in the vernacular. The people are not taught modern trades but, rather, how to modernize traditional ones.

Functional literacy programs are usually specifically linked to local needs in order to facilitate community development. In Senegal the program is called "animation rurale" and sets about to accomplish certain "modernizing" projects.[100] The ability to read directions and compute crop yields can have lasting effects on the economy of a region.

The public library can coordinate its collection to provide much needed support for these programs. The library can keep a large pamphlet collection on pertinent subjects. By establishing a liaison with the government agencies responsible for their production, the library can become a conduit through which these materials are disseminated. Because of their transitory nature they need not be checked out but can be distributed freely instead. In this manner the population will come to know their library as a vital source of information which can change their lives and cease to think of it as a place where only educated people go. After the program is over, the library remains as a continuing source of information and materials.

THE LIBRARY AND NATION-BUILDING

> The public libraries must become the
> equivalent of our village squares if
> they are to fulfill their mission in
> Nigeria -- nay, in all African societies.
> Chidi Anyim "Public Libraries
> as Cultural Centers."

The role of the library in education is indispensable, but it does not stop with education. Developing nations have a cultural life and communication and information needs which are as vital to their existence as increased productivity.

Many West African nations are composed of numerous tribal groups with traditional hostilities which can impede the evolution of a national identity. Libraries, as transmitters of culture, can promote cultural diffusion and foster an understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity.

The quadrennial plan of the Ivory Coast stresses cultural development as a factor in economic development. There is an emphasis on the production and transmittal of information. The Ministry of National Education has designated libraries as one of the principal means of improving this production.[101]

The need for information networks to facilitate the exchange of technical and scientific information, as well as to support rural extension services, is strongly felt in the modern world. The West African countries share this feeling. As their infrastructures develop and their library networks expand this need will become a reality.

While the library must be careful not to become an organ of the government, it can participate in educating the citizen as to his role in the new state. It can assist him in formulating constructive and critical opinions on public issues and, in so doing, provide a climate favorable to social change.

The library can act as a catalyst in shaping a national consciousness. By identifying with the problems and aspirations of its social milieu, the library assists in stabilizing an agreed upon social order. One Nigerian has described the library as "the foyer of living ideas -- ideas that permeate and animate all aspects of national life."[102]

VII. LIBRARIES AND THE NEED FOR PLANNING

THE VALUE OF PLANNING

If library development is accepted as a necessary component in national development then the planning services must be integrated into the overall development plan, which will include both education and the publishing industry. The coordination of these three areas is essential. Educational programs require libraries and both depend on books. Failure to adequately provide for one of these areas will undoubtedly undermine all other efforts.

As we have seen, the library is involved in many aspects of national life; the university, cultural programs, book promotion, primary and secondary schools, etc. In order to avoid duplication and waste, to maximize scarce resources, and to coordinate development, West African countries are increasingly becoming aware of the need to plan national library services.

This means that libraries must be concerned with two kinds of planning; an "external planning" i.e. vis a vis other items in the national development plan, and an "internal planning" to synchronize all the various types of services that libraries provide.

The importance of planning in order to receive sufficient public and financial support cannot be overstressed. Planning and advancement go hand-in-hand. A public library system which has a two, five, or ten year development plan, which is then part of the general development plan, makes more headway. This is clearly demonstrated by the public library services in Ghana, Eastern Nigeria and Sierra Leone, where such plans have existed and have been incorporated into the larger plans.[103]

Planning at the national level is a complicated process. When UNESCO held its "Expert Meeting on National Planning of Documentation and Library Services in Africa" at Kampala in 1970 it was observed that responsibility for library service was rarely centered in one ministry. "Thus the Ministry of Education might be responsible for school libraries, the Ministry of Culture for public libraries; another ministry for national libraries, each individual ministry for the provision of libraries within its own sphere of activity.[104] They decided that one body should be responsible for library planning and that it should be created and backed by legislation. All libraries should be represented in this body, which would report to one ministry only. The ministry would be its spokesman and support in the political arena.

These experts were not alone in their conclusions. In 1975 in their work on Planning National Infrastructures for Documentation, Libraries and Archives, d'Olier and Delmas expressed the opinion that in countries with populations of less than twenty million (most of West Africa falls into this category) it is preferable to establish one national body which would act as a central library, a national documentation center and a coordinating agency, and carry out research and planning.[105]

This approach or some variation has been taken or proposed in a number of West African countries. In 1967 La Direction des Affaires Culturelles of the Ivory Coast created a Service of Libraries and Publications. As a result of the National Library Decree of 1970 Nigerian librarians have suggested the formation of a National Committee for Libraries. Since 1969 Upper Volta has had a National Commission for Libraries, Documentation and Archives. In 1976 the government showed interest in establishing, within the Ministry of Education and Culture, a directorate of library and information services to implement the decision of the Commission.

ORGANIZATIONS FOR PLANNING: NATIONAL LIBRARIES AND LIBRARY BOARDS

The experts' findings are widely appreciated and accepted but the fact remains that in West Africa, generally, the responsibility for library development and coordination falls to either (or both) the National Library or a Library Board. Even when a special committee or organization is formed it will work in close association with these institutions.

Some countries have active national libraries; Ivory Coast, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. Other nations have national libraries in name only, e.g., Mali, Gambia, and Benin. Countries such as Guinea, Upper Volta and Senegal have no institution that is called a national library, although Senegal has made plans to build one. Other countries make due with some sort of national archives, but most expect to have a national library sometime in the future. Aside from its obvious prestige value, what are the functions of a national library?

As the central agency for the development of library services the body will be concerned with defining the roles of the various types of libraries in the country. This must be done so that each service will assume responsibility for specific tasks. When goals and objectives are known, performance can be evaluated. The national library in consultation with any professional library associations or library board should attempt to set standards which will be applied throughout the country.

In its more familiar role, the national library is the depository for materials published nationally and materials about the country published abroad. It is expected to publish a national bibliography and function as the bibliographic information center for the whole country, providing centralized cataloging, supporting interlibrary loan, etc. These duties underscore its obligation to preserve national culture.

Because in developing countries there is often no other significant library, the national library may also double as a center for the international exchange of publications. For the most part, this is a goal for the future since in Africa national libraries "usually lack the infrastructures, skilled staff and financial resources necessary for this work of centralization."[106]

If the nation also has a library board there may be a division of labor. The national library may concentrate on the bibliographic functions while the board would be responsible for proposing a budget, harmonizing the allocation of resources from both internal and external sources, and drafting legislation. In the absence of a board, the national library might be expected to carry out all of these tasks. It might also have to act as a center for research in librarianship!

Under such circumstances certain areas will suffer. The burden is impossible but, at present, the national library is often the only agency in any way equipped to bear it. For some West African countries just beginning their library services, the pattern of centralization which results from this situation may prove, in time, to have been a boon for library development.

The establishment of a library board is another approach to developing library services. This is perhaps what the experts at Kampala had in mind when they advocated the formation of one separate body. The Library Board of the Gold Coast (now Ghana), discussed earlier, was the first example of a statutory body created specifically for the promotion of libraries in a West African country. It is financed entirely by an annual subvention from the government but grants-in-aid may also be made by the municipal governments. The Library Board is under the Ministry of Education and Culture. Its duties today do not differ appreciably from those described in the 1950 Ordinance; "to establish, equip, manage and maintain libraries in the Gold Coast, and to take all steps as may be necessary to carry out such a duty."[107] In practice, as mentioned above, a board's concerns tend to center on financial, administrative and legal matters, but the commission is broad enough to include all aspects of librarianship. The Ghana Library School began as a non-university institution attached to the Board.

A combination of the two, library board and national library, exists in Nigeria. An inadequate National Library Act of 1964 was "repaired" and strengthened by the National Library Decree of 1970. Now there is a national library with legal deposit and bibliographic functions and a National Library Board charged with the general functions of establishing and maintaining a central library for the benefit of members of the public. Each state is responsible for its own services, which are overseen by local and district councils, but the Board coordinates the work of the regional and institutional libraries. It is under the Ministry of Education.[108] Sierra Leone also has a Library Board.

In the Ivory Coast the National Documentation Center, established in 1974, and the National Library jointly assume responsibility for deposit, bibliography, etc.

Whatever the organization is called, and however the work is divided, it is clear that developing countries, with their limited resources, must plan and coordinate their library efforts in order to maximize their potential for growth.

VII. LIBRARY LEGISLATION

> Only legislation can empower the appropriate authorities to provide the service and ensure the adequate financial support and efficient administration according to a national standard.
> Only legislation can define the functions of the providing authority, create the conditions in which it may fulfill those functions, and ensure development.
> Ibadan Seminar 1954.

Such was the considered opinion of those who met back in 1954 to discuss the development of public libraries in Africa. Almost twenty-five years have passed and the lack of library legislation remains an obstacle to development in many West African countries.

As the quote indicates, library legislation seeks to make the government legally (hence, publically and financially) obliged to provide library service. The functions of the executing body must be legally sanctioned (hence, defined and stipulated). In addition, library legislation often involves legal deposit. Other types of legislation, such as foreign exchange controls and government subsidies indirectly affect libraries through their influence on the development of the book trade. This will be discussed later.

The elements to be incorporated in the legislation were outlined at Ibadan, reiterated at Enugu in 1962, and they appeared again in 1971 in Gardner's study for UNESCO on public library legislation. These essential ingredients include:

1. The general authorization of expenditure without fixing a maximum.

2. compulsory implementation whenever conditions become favorable

3. the obligation to employ only qualified and trained personnel as librarians and to authorize development only when professionally trained librarians are available to administer the service

4. the provision of service for the entire population, aiming at free service

5. the inter-lending of books between libraries so that the book resources of the whole territory are available to all

6. the provision of books on every opinion

In her article "Library legislation in the developing territories of Africa" Evelyn Evans, one of the architects of the highly successful Ghana Library Board Ordinance, discussed some common principles to follow when formulating library legislation. Evans recommended that the legislation be simple and general to allow for future developments. Gardner too emphasized this practical consideration. He feels that legislation should be flexible in order to respond to changes in social conditions , local government structure and the tax base. The French pattern of library legislation which tends to be very specific may be too exact for general application and adaptability. Both commentators note the importance of progressive application, i.e. compulsion closely related to local financial resources. Evans firmly believes that such legislation should be above the vicissitudes of politics, and that it should state explicitly that library service be free and accessible to all.

Gardner expresses some reservations about the Ghana Ordinance. It is a very uncomplicated and general law whose simplicity has allowed the Board to act quickly and decisively, yet he feels, on the whole, that it may be overly vague. This legislation has been used as a model throughout English-speaking West Africa. With minor changes it was the basis of laws both in Sierra Leone and Eastern Nigeria.[109]

Along with common principles, library legislation poses certain basic problems. The need for a central authority may be indisputable, but should it be governmental or independent? Should legislation be mandatory and progressive or permissive? Does federal imposition reduce much needed local government interest? Different countries have reached different conclusions yet the fact remains; there is a correlation between library legislation and library development.

Worldwide there is abundant evidence that rapid library development follows closely after legislation.[110] In West Africa countries with legislation, e.g. Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, generally provide much better library service, particularly public libraries, than do countries where no such legislation exists, e.g. Benin, or where it exists in principle but not in force, e.g. Liberia.[111,112] Within Nigeria the earliest and greatest progress in public library work was made in Eastern Nigeria, where the library program was based on law.[113]

As of 1971 Ghana's public library system had fifty service points and employed thirty-three full-time diplomed librarians. Nigeria's public library system had seventy-four service points using seventy professionals. Sierra Leone, in 1974, provided eleven service points, staffed by eight librarians. Although the Ivory Coast, as of 1972, had only two public service points with four professionals, it was in better shape than most of the rest of French-speaking West Africa.

Of course, this does not mean that the general public has, as yet, equal access to these services. In Ghana public libraries reach 53% of the population. The Ivory Coast's facilities reach 15% and Nigeria's, a scant 4%.[114] Good legislation, as we saw, emphasizes service to all. It can act as a catalyst for expansion.

Legal deposit is another aspect of library legislation. In Nigeria the publisher is obliged to deposit at his own expense, one month after publication, two copies of his work to the National Library and one to Ibadan University Library.

for government agencies and departments deposits of twenty-five or ten copies (according to type of publication) of everything that they publish is required.[115] The National Library in Abidjan receives the deposit copies for works published in the Ivory Coast.

Some legal deposit laws do not include government publications. The Book and Newspaper Registration Act of 1961 (amended in 1963) is Ghana's legal deposit law. Deposit in six different locations is required but government publications are generally excluded.

Many countries e.g. Benin, Liberia have no deposit laws. Senegal had no legal deposit requirements as of 1973 and only recently has there been some legislation concerning archives.

Traditionally the onus for deposit has been with the publishers. Libraries, as a rule, do not have any real force with which to insist that publishers cooperate and comply. Without their willing cooperation efforts to produce a national bibliography are seriously hampered. In addition, libraries lack the extra time needed to track down and prosecute delinquent publishers. Librarians in some countries have suggested the formation of a separate legal deposit service to pursue remiss publishers.

VIII. STANDARDS FOR LIBRARY SERVICE

No discussion of the development of library services is complete without reference to the problem of standards. The world over, in all types of libraries, there is a need for standards of service. Countries without a long tradition of library service are especially mindful of it.

When the experts met at Kampala and agreed that a single national body should be responsible for the develment of an integrated library system, they included the formulation of standards as one of its functions. They also suggested figures for volumes per student, percentage of annual educational expenditure which should be spent on libraries, etc.

At a seminar on standards for West African libraries held at Ibadan in 1967, the creation and application of standards for all types of libraries were discussed. Awareness of the African context was stressed: "A code of standards for West Africa must be based upon the resources of the country and neither copied haphazardly from programmes adopted in more prosperous lands -- programmes which might well represent quite unattainable goals in West Africa -- nor based upon existing practice here."[116] British and American practice may serve as a model in anglophone West Africa, French practice can influence formulation in the francophone countries. However, any model should be simply a departure point. Actual formulation must be firmly rooted in the national environment.

The idea that standards should not be based on existing practice is equally important. Their purpose is to incite improvement, not to sanction the status quo. In many places in West Africa libraries seem to have all the basic services required to meet the needs of the public. Essentially, though, these services are geared towards the ten to twenty percent literate population.[117] If standards are to present an impetus for development they must encourage programs for the benefit of the other eighty percent. That is, they should actively strive to increase their audience through participation in adult education programs and literacy campaigns.

In countries where human and material resources are scarce standards can introduce provisions to ensure their optimum use. By monitoring performance, standards can bring to light inadequacies which may be wasteful. When standards are devised and enforced,outside agencies, such as governments and foundations, can see that money is well spent. The very fact that standards exist may increase library allocations.

The question of standards extends beyond library service. The problem of standards for library education, both professional and non-professional, is a complex one. It will be discussed in the following chapter.

IX. THE PROBLEM OF STAFFING

Throughout the literature on African libraries a number of problems constantly reappear. These are problems which are common to all types of libraries in all of West Africa. The first of these to be discussed is the problem of staffing. This involves the training of adequate numbers of persons, at both the professional and non-professional levels, to maintain and foster the development of efficient, effective national library services.

The question of training was a major concern at Ibadan. The most important recommendations made at the Enugu Conference in 1962 were related to library training. In a 1966 article entitled "UNESCO and library and related services in Africa", Frank Gardner noted that training was still the most urgent problem. The IFLA Working Group on Developing Countries in March of 1973 included library education in what it considered to be "broad problem areas".[118] This reiteration indicates that, historically, staffing has been a serious problem for libraries in developing countries and, that it still presents a difficulty. The necessity for adequate training was underscored by Silvere Willemin when he called it "the driving force behind library development."[119]

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Library education must be viewed in the context of the general educational problems of developing areas. A shortage of qualified teachers heads the list. The inappropriate nature of most curricula has proved to be another serious impediment. The imbalance between urban and rural advancement has already been discussed. A less widely publicized though equally significant obstacle, has been the inability to overcome traditional resistance to female participation in education. The monopolization of higher-level graduates by government bureaucracies has also taken its toll. Inherited colonial values which contribute to a lingering conservatism are still found in many educational systems.[120] Although these problems do not represent insurmountable barriers, they will affect both the planning and development of programs for library education.

Just as overall library expansion requires good planning, library education must be designed in coordination with general economic and educational programs. The number of librarians needed will depend on such things as national expenditure on libraries, the success of literacy campaigns, the types of libraries and the level of sophistication expected. A country with few libraries is not advised to begin an advanced library education program. Developing nations which need librarians to assist in literacy campaigns and adult education programs should not invest all their funds in training archivists and documentalists. If regional or overseas training is the only possibility, adjustment to local conditions must be made after so that the methods learned are adapted to the local situation. Such planning helps avoid waste and encourages the creation of an indigenous approach to librarianship.

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

[illegible]. WHERE AND HOW TO TRAIN

The first two questions which arise in any discussion of library education for West Africa are: should training occur at home or abroad, and what type of education (advanced graduate, undergraduate or a non-university technical program) should be emphasized?

As regards the first question, differences in the state of library development in the various West African countries make generalizations difficult. In the French-speaking countries, training abroad is often the only solution. Trained librarians are few and they cannot be spared to train others. Libraries are too scarce and inadequate to serve as laboratories for practical experience.[121] However, the Regional Center at the University of Dakar has reduced, in many cases, the need for French-speaking West Africans to travel long distances to completely foreign cultures. For example, as of 1974, most of the librarians in the Ivory Coast had been trained at Dakar.[122]

Education abroad has certain positive aspects. The future librarian sees the relatively high status that librarians have in many of the developed countries. He is exposed to technical achievements and new approaches to library service. He may establish lasting international ties with members of the profession. While these may be real advantages, it is generally believed that they do not offset the disadvantages. There is a growing feeling of disenchantement among African librarians toward foreign library education.[123]

Increasingly, librarians are realizing that library schools are a part of a nation's library resources. They provide a center for research into the country's particular library problems and thus contribute to library development. If they are associated with a university the status of the profession is vastly improved. As a result, the opinions of librarians and their arguments for more government support may be listened to with greater attention.

For the student the experience abroad can be a disheartening and upsetting one. Language barriers and cultural differences often prove too much for the student to handle. Because of dissimilarities in development and culture much of the material will be irrelevant. Instead of learning about techniques of conservation in tropical climates the student is instructed in the pitfalls of central heating! Library courses designed by Africans and taught in the African environment can produce a librarian more specifically attuned to the problems of his country or region.

In fact, Ronald Benge believes that the central conflict in African library education "derives from a conflict between an attempt to reach international standards on the one hand and national relevance on the other."[124] Library schools which stress an advanced, theoretical approach may receive international recognition and respect but such a program may fail to provide the basics needed by the developing country at its particular stage of development.

The difficulties in securing qualified lecturers are considerable. Expatriot assistance is indispensable for the first few years.. After that, teaching positions should begin to be filled by nationals. Of course, a school always benefits from an infusion of new ideas, so visiting professors should always be welcome.

Whenever a student is sent abroad to study the government makes an investment, one with a risk. For any number of reasons, political, personal, economic, the student may decide not to return to his country. The French Secretary of State for Universities has estimated that approximately 15% of the university graduates who came from Mali remained in France after completing their studies.[125] The pattern is similar throughout West Africa.

But this is not the only type of "brain drain" which the library profession experiences. There is an internal drain as well. Often librarians leave the profession or never take it up at all. They are lured into more prestigious or lucrative positions in government or private industry. They have a university or foreign degree in a 'sellers' market.

Proponents of education at home are quick to recognize the fact that education must be good as well as nationalistic. That is to say, they do not advocate education without standards. Where facilities are available home training is the preferred method. They note that "national training has always been considered the best solution in the older countries and there seems no reason why this should not apply to the younger nations."[126]

The obvious compromise, mentioned above, is the establishment of a number of regional training centers. Many countries do not have a demand sufficient to warrant a national library school but, with their neighbors, could support a regional effort. The schools existing in West Africa, because they are so few in number, are de facto if not de jure regional schools. Nevertheless, the financial burden and ultimate policy decisions are national. The complexities of regional coordination are substantial (and will be discussed later), yet the appeal is certainly strong.

A regional school might create a sufficient concentration of teaching staff to allow teachers to specialize in their fields. The cost is shared by many countries. A center of this size has less difficulty in attracting an international teaching staff of high quality. As we saw above, these professionals are extremely important for the successful launching of a new library school in a developing country. Lastly, the school can undertake research on a regional basis, thereby avoiding duplication of effort.

Obviously there are many drawbacks to regional cooperation. These drawbacks, along with other possible areas for regional cooperation will be discussed at the conclusion of the paper.

The second question as to what type of education to emphasize is best decided by each country individually. They must analyze their needs in order to harmonize their various library programs. Throughout West Africa staff is roughly divided into four educational levels. The non-professional staff has 10-12 years of schooling. The first level professional staff has between twelve and fourteen years. Senior professional staff may have a post-graduate diploma in library science and the specialist staff has an M.A. or perhaps a Ph.D., in library science.

The high illiteracy rate means that even the simplest library tasks such as shelf-reading are beyond the capabilities of all but a very select group. With the ability to read being at a premium libraries are often unable to attract competent non-professionals or, once they have attracted and trained them, to keep them. Salaries are usually better elsewhere.

In Sierra Leone library educators have found that sending students overseas for training "has tended to produce more trained non-graduate professionals, but has not catered adequately for the essential supporting staff of library assistants and attendants."[127] Thus, the need to train at all levels was recognized.

John Dean, in his work Planning Library Education Programmes: A Study in the Developing Countries, discusses the semi-professional course, a particular necessity in West Africa. He points out that these courses are less formal than those at the professional level and students need not have a specialized background. The middle-grade assistant thus produced makes a valuable contribution by freeing the professional from many tasks which do not require his expertise. As an interim measure the courses are attractive economically. The semi-professional is less expensive to train in terms of both time and money, but, Dean adds a warning. These are para-professionals and they do not replace the need for professional librarians. Their training usually consists of "a basic orientation, training in routine techniques and some bibliographical background."[128]

As far as professional courses are concerned Dean emphasizes the need for core curriculum. Rather than training specialists, these countries should concentrate on creating a group of librarians who are flexible and adaptable. They must be able to carry out all the basic functions (cataloging, reference, etc.) in all types of libraries. A similar conclusion was reached by Ogundipe in his article on library education in Sierra Leone.[129]

Dean estimated that a developing country could offer a good basic professional course for approximately sixty students with a full-time staff of six. There would be fo four basic areas of study; foundation, administration, bibliographic resources and retrieval studies. Dean also insists that "all research programs, even those conducted for the purpose of obtaining research degrees, should normally be related to the solution of some practical problem of relevance to local or regional library development."[130] Even at the university level library education must be closely linked to practice and the amelioration of the library situation.

STANDARDS AND STATUS

The question of standards for library education is directly related to the issue of professional status. If nation-wide qualifications are established and imposed the public will come to expect and appreciate excellence in its librarians. The effect of standards is generally salutory. Library education is upgraded. National standards eliminate the confusion and attendant problems of equating courses and qualifications when degrees differ.

Nigeria, in particular, has two library training centers; the first was established at Ibadan in 1960, and the second was opened in 1968 at Ahmadu Bello University at Zaria. Ibadan offers four different programs; a postgraduate diploma course, an MLS, a Ph.D. in library studies, and a certificate in library studies for non-graduates. Ahmadu Bello has two degree programs; a three-year course leading to a BLS and an MLS. They also have a diploma course for senior assistant librarians.[131] Diplomas within Nigeria mean different things. In addition, programs may have the same objectives but their admission requirements and duration vary. In a situation like this the value of some sort of standardisation is apparent.

Although the Nigerian Library Association (as of 1975) lacked the legal power of enforcement it was drawing up plans for a National Committee on Library Education. This committee would be responsible for collating training programs, preparing national standards of certification for both professionals and para-professionals, and exploring means of implementing certification at the national level.[132] Ogundipe recognized the same need in Sierra Leone and he, too, felt that the professional association, the Sierra Leone Library Association, should participate.[133]

Dean is adamant on the subject of standards. He feels that it is "absolutely essential that governments insist that all qualifications awarded in librarianship be examined, assessed and approved by a competent body."[134] A national library association is a logical candidate for the job.

Library associations, by representing the librarian as a capable professional, can do much to dispel his poor public image. By advocating high educational standards the associations can strengthen their arguments for better salaries and academic status. The university librarian need no longer be subordinate to a non-librarian who holds the director's position simply because he has a university degree. Although developing countries do not need, at present, great numbers of librarians with advanced diplomas, they will sometime in the future. They feel that librarianship must be viewed as an academic discipline. The fact that the library schools in Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal all began as non-university institutions, but by the mid 1960s, had all become part of universities attests to this trend.

There are established library associations in Ghana, Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Nigeria (2), Senegal (2), Sierra Leone, Togo, and Upper Volta. In 1976 the library associations in Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal "worked with or petitioned their governments to adopt legislation to establish libraries and library service, to give greater recognition to the library profession, and to improve standards through the creation of library boards."[135]

The Sierra Leone, Ghana, and Nigerian library associations publish journals. These journals are one of the few sources of information available on the library situation in West Africa.

Attempts at regional organization have been less successful. AIDBA, as we have seen, has had moderate success. West African Library Association (WALA), which was founded at the Ibadan Seminar, functioned as a professional association for anglophone West Africa until 1962 when national planning and committments began to take precedence. By 1962 it was no longer possible to accomodate national programs and policies within the context of a West African professional body. At this time a number of national associations were formed.[136]

SOME WEST AFRICAN LIBRARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In 1961 a library school was begun in Ghana to conduct courses for the British Library Association examinations. Prior to this time preparation for the exams consisted of organized intensive in-training, correspondence courses, or full-time courses in the United Kingdom.[137] The direction of the school was transferred from the Library Board to the University of Ghana in 1965. The first program offered a B.A. in Library Studies. Further changes in the curriculum were made. The degree course was dropped and a one-year postgraduate diploma course was begun in 1969. An M.A. program was introduced in 1971.

The diploma course was designed to prepare future librarians for entry-level professional positions. The course provides basic professional training "with its syllabus geared to the needs and special problems of library development in West Africa, and especially in Ghana."[138]

The M.A. program is intended to prepare already experienced professional librarians to become administrators and professors of library science. A subject specialization is required and a dissertation of at least twenty thousand words.

The school also offers a certificate course. This course is for the would-be library assistant. Instruction in technical operations is given. In order to be admitted to the course the student must have had at least two years library experience and have completed the equivalent of high school.[139]

This strong emphasis on library education within the university setting is an interesting phenomenon in a former British colony. Great Britain is one of the few countries of the world which, until recently, organized the majority of courses in librarianship outside the university. Originally in Ghana there was resistance to the university connection on the part of expatriot librarians and others who had been trained in the British tradition of in-service training and examinations. By rejecting the British pattern in favor of a system more like the American (and which the British themselves are now adopting) Ghana may have been making a political statement as well as formulating a policy of library education.

Since Nigeria's programs have already been discussed we come to the last library school in West Africa and the only French one, Ecole de Bibliothècaires, Archivistes et Documentalistes at the University of Dakar. When it was inaugurated its curriculum was planned to satisfy three fundamental requirements: to provide a sound theoretical and practical knowledge of library techniques, to consider and adapt training to the African condition, and to supplement the students' generally limited backgrounds by including general educational courses. Its main purpose was to train students for public library work.[140]

The school began as a joint project between UNESCO and the Senegalese government. The original course lasted eight months. There was a separate program for archivists, but all students took courses on history, African culture, etc. IFAN, as we learned earlier, sponsored the very first courses for the region and AIDBA once organized a six-month course in conjunction with the Municipal Library of Toulouse. These programs were more in the nature of technical training courses.

Although at one time *four* categories of courses were offered, it was decided in 1974 to concentrate on two programs; the postgraduate diploma for full professionals and a two-year A.B. type of degree for paraprofessionals.[141]

The school is strongly regional, realistic, and practical in its approach. The fact that students come from developed countries such as France and Canada gives some indication of its standards and international reputation.

Unfortunately, the Dakar school must serve a very large area. At the Kampala meeting the "lack of a sufficient number of training institutions was particularly felt by the participants from the French-speaking area."[142]

In 1974 a library school was founded in Liberia. It is the only West African library school not attached to a university. (Further information was not available.) On the whole, however, West Africans believe that there are considerable advantages in affiliating the library school with the university. Willemin divides these advantages into two categories, sociological and practical. The former includes status, personal contacts, and the improved communications between the library profession and the academic world. Some practical gains are; the application of university standards to courses, better tuition, facilities, critical attitudes towards curricula and continual re-evaluation.[143]

The traditional dichotomy described by Asheim between education for leadership in the European manner or education for general development[144] need not exist in West Africa. West African librarians have sought a synthesis by stressing high standards and courses tailored to the African situation.

X. RESOURCES

The second major problem area for libraries in developing countries is broadly termed "resources". Included under this heading are all the things which, when available, will encourage and support library development: sufficient funding, a literate public with a flourishing national literature, and a significantly developed and organized publishing industry. We have seen how libraries grow out of their social environment and how they assist in its development. We shall now see how library development is influenced by the presence or absence of these resources.

FUNDING

Roughly divided, funding may be said to fall into two types, internal and external. In West Africa adverse economic conditions preclude the existence of many private foundations with vast sums of money to be distributed to a worthy cause. Consequently, internal means governmental. The problems of getting sufficient support from a government beleaguered by requests have already been discussed. There simply is not enough to go around.

External aid is another matter. There are many foreign non-profit organizations and private foundations which are interested in promoting libraries or indirectly promote them by promoting publishing or book development. Both the British Council and the Carnegie Corporation have been active in West Africa. The Franklin Book Programs, supported by USAID/Nigeria and the Ford Foundation, established a four-year project in Nigeria to train writers, editors, publishers, and others involved in the technical side of publishing, e.g. printers, graphic artists, etc.[145] Trade and professional associations in the publishing world have undertaken similar projects.

Bilateral aid is another important means of securing funds. France has entered into agreements with a number of her former colonies. Assistance is usually in the form of aid to education, although French language textbooks and reference books have been supplied on occasion. Of course, the United States provides funds and technical assistance, too. The Peace Corps is active throughout West Africa and it has projects specifically concerned with library development. The USIA (now a part of ICA) does not appear to have had a great impact on libraries in the region.

International organizations, particularly UNESCO, have made lasting contributions to the growth of library service in West Africa. Fellowships, pilot projects, regional seminars and institutionalized training courses; UNESCO has approached the problem of library development from every angle. Mention of specific efforts have appeared throughout this paper.

"Another UN sponsored project UN Development Programme (UNDP) has been helpful in West Africa. It was instrumental in implementing a plan to open 1,000 functional literacy centers in Togo."[146]

IFLA has a working group which looks into the special problems of libraries in developing countries. Increasingly, library associations in West Africa are turning to IFLA for professional guidance and support, and as a forum for stimulating discussions with their peers in the international world of librarianship.

Because national resources are scarce, developing countries often find that they must rely heavily upon these foreign sources. A "gift" is always political in some way. In addition, cultural differences can create misunderstandings which leave one or both parties disappointed or insulted. If foreign aid is to be an asset there must be understanding and flexibility all around. That such assistance is crucial for development was recognized in 1962 at Enugu. The situation has not changed.

THE LEGACY OF THE ORAL TRADITION

> When an old man dies in Africa, it is
> as if a whole library had perished...
>
> A delegate to the UNESCO Seminar
> of Librarians from Asia, Africa
> and Latin America in the USSR.

This simple quotation indicates an essential difference between the Western nations and most of the countries of West Africa; Western nations have had a written tradition for centuries but, even today, many African languages are without a written form. The value, aesthetically, culturally, of the oral tradition is not at issue here. The question is: how has the oral tradition affected library development?

Because libraries are intimately bound up with the written tradition, the absence of such a tradition will reduce both the clientele and the collection. Nations with oral traditions naturally have high illiteracy rates. They have not felt the need to record on paper, stone, parchment, etc. their stores of knowledge and legend. Since they have not written it down there is no national literature *in book form*. There is nothing to put on the library's shelves.

Now that these countries have begun to develop their technology and improve the conditions of everyday life, they have come to realize the value and necessity of reading. As Philip Altbach, an authority on publishing in the developing countries has observed, "books are not the sole artifacts of a culture, but they are among the prerequisites of a modern society."[147] Literacy campaigns have had some success but they have also demonstrated that there are serious obstacles, psychological as well as physical, to be overcome in teaching an African to read.

For the African the act of reading is not only foreign but it is contrary to his custom of listening for education and amusement. "La lecteur apparait comme un élément totalement étranger au système culturel african: acte solitaire et silencieux, elle s'insère mal dans une culture ou prévalent l'oralité et le sens de la collectivité."[148]

Many Africans, when they do learn to read, are strictly utilitarian in their approach. They may read to pass an exam but nothing further. The authoritarian tradition of schooling reinforces this tendency. The teacher, not the book is the source of information.

The environment is influential, too. The tropical climate reduces one's desire to "stay indoors and read". Since living conditions are cramped the privacy necessary for reading is often an impossibility. Poor or no lighting further restricts reading time.[149]

Attitudes and environment may be changed. Literacy programs specialize in altering the former and libraries aim to improve the latter. However, both will fail if suitable materials are not available. Unfortunately, in West Africa there are a great many reasons why such materials are scarce.

As we have seen, the presence of a colonial power resulted in the use of a non-African language in government, education and, naturally, in printed materials. At the time of independence many countries repudiated the colonial language. But, Africa is linguistically complex, and governments soon realized that the areas which had been consolidated by the colonial powers were frequently linguistically unsuited. Many native languages had no written form, no literary resources, no formalized grammar and no currency outside of a narrow tribal area.[150]

The choice of a new national language (or languages) is not a simple matter. Nigeria has over 200 different languages. Over fifty-six are spoken in Ghana. Sierra Leone, with a population of about two million, has eighteen.[151] Ethnic rivalries and political exigencies exacerbate the situation.

Most countries do not make the same effort for all of their languages. They could not. Guinea, which has provided for eight languages to be used in both schools and adult education programs, is the exception. Niger named five national languages but only two are used in adult education. Mali limited itself to four. These cover about eighty percent of the population. Though unavoidable, some rightly claim that the procedure, rather than raising the national consciousness, may be detrimental to national unity.[152]

When the scarcity of materials in the vernacular is coupled with the presence of so much material in either French or English the full magnitude of the problem is revealed. Although these languages may have "a certain neutrality as well as an international value",[153] the materials often express a European or Western viewpoint. Attempts at the "Africanization" of foreign produced (or non-indigenous) material have been generally unsuccessful. The changes (African names, black faces) do not account for cultural and psychological differences.

In a situation so complicated and seemingly hopeless there is much that the library can do. The traditional conservatorial role should be exercised. Libraries should be actively involved in the preservation of their country's oral tradition. They might record their own local oral history, or serve as regional centers for the transcription of oral histories, poetry, songs, etc.

Since so many of the library's potential users are either unable to read a book or are not yet comfortable doing so, libraries should provide a lot of non-book material.

The neo-literate is of special concern. Libraries must encourage publishers to produce material for this audience. The books ought to be specifically designed with the adult in mind. They should be kept at an adult level, plainly written, simply but pleasantly presented, and on subjects of interest to the African.

Libraries can work in conjunction with national curriculum centers and literature bureaus to see that the fertile African imagination is used to its fullest potential. This means bringing their stories and experiences into the national domain for the benefit of all fellow countrymen.

THE SCARCITY OF PRINTED MATERIALS

. THE STATE OF PUBLISHING

> Good publishing lies somewhere between
> commerce and public interest.
> Samuel U. Ifejika *Indigenous Publishing in Nigeria*.

The difficulties which the oral tradition has created for library development have been discussed. Steps which libraries can take to minimize or circumvent these difficulties have been suggested. However, the basic problem, the scarcity of books, cannot be solved by libraries alone. In West Africa it is not only "suitable" or vernacular materials which are scarce; books of all kinds are rare. This paucity is the result of two factors; the underdeveloped state of the West African publishing industry, and the absence of a good system of book distribution.

In the mid 1960s UNESCO published a working paper entitled "Books in the Promotion of Development in Africa" which supplied the statistical background for the formal meeting in Accra in 1968. Some of the statistics were included in the Accra report. They provide ample proof of the poor state of the publishing industry thoughout Africa.

Of the thirty-four countries surveyed for the report only twenty produced any titles whatsoever. Seven of these countries published less than twenty titles annually and, only five produced more that one hundred. The paper estimated that for 1965-1966 only six titles for every African appeared, as opposed to 418 per million in Europe. The average number of copies per title rarely exceeded 8,000. Books on the pure and applied sciences, works especially valuable in countries which desire to further their development, constituted less than 20% of the titles. At the time that the paper was written 75% of the books in Africa came from outside the continent.[154]

The picture has not changed much since Accra. As of 1976 there were only two African nations which could be considered major book producing countries, Nigeria and South Africa.[155] Nigeria published 337 titles in 1974. Of the West African countries Ghana, with 366 titles, was second. Among the francophone countries the Ivory Coast, with 260 titles in 1973, was the major publisher. The other West African countries publish occasionally, but nothing appreciable.[156]

Generally, the development of the publishing industry in francophone Africa lags behind the anglophone countries. In addition, the French-speaking nations, unlike anglophone Africa, publish almost nothing in the African languages.[157] Their varying colonial experiences suggest some reasons for these discrepancies.

At an early date in the colonial period the British allowed the use of the vernacular in primary education. They felt that to do so was politically expedient and in keeping with their policy of indirect rule. French was used exclusively in the former French colonies; a necessity for the success of their assimilation policy.

Whereas the ambitious English-speaking West African who wrote for an audience beyond his own locality faced British publishers who were reluctant to publish material which they felt would not be of general interest, the French-speaking West African had his own publishing house in Paris. Alioune Diop, a noted West African author, established a firm to publish the works of Africans writing in French, Présence Africaine.[158]

The assimilated West African intellectual had a ready forum which the anglophone writers lacked. Consequently, the francophone continues to be published abroad while necessity has prompted the establishment of various publishing firms in anglophone West Africa. Some of these are indigenous and others are not. Admittedly, the English-speaker may still choose to be published abroad because the prestige may be greater and the audience, larger. However, with two university presses, Ghana and Ibadan, other commercial publishers and various non-indigenous firms, he has many African options.

Economic factors, as well as the accidents of history, conspire against the development of the publishing industry in West Africa. Altbach, in his article "Publishing in the Developing Countries" discusses the basic preconditions for the development of the book trade: A literate public which uses the written word and has sufficient purchasing power, adequate physical facilities, personnel with the necessary professional and technical skills, a promotion and distribution network, and capital.[159] West Africa is lacking in all these areas. The production of paper, the essential ingredient for publishing, is concentrated almost exclusively in the developed nations.

Publishing is a commercial venture and requires a considerable investment. Because of the nature of the industry turnover is slow and it is a long time before investments show a profit. For a title to be profitable many copies must be printed. High illiteracy rates greatly reduce the number of potential buyers. African publishers often find that the market is too small to support the production levels required. This limits the publishers'freedom to experiment with new writers and different kinds of materials. Even in a nation as large as Nigeria only some textbooks, certain kinds of popular fiction and religious books are profitable to publish.[160] The consequences for library collection development are disastrous.

Government support of the publishing industry is particularly important in developing countries. Some have suggested government subsidies for scholarly publishing and special interest-rates for long-term loans. invested in publishing or the book trade. A government which supports the free flow of books yet imposes import-taxes on the raw materials which go into the making of books (paper, ink, printing and binding equipment, etc.) does a disservice to publishers and, ultimately, to itself.

Foreign trade regulations involve libraries directly as well as indirectly through their impact on publishing. Many West African nations have serious foreign exchange problems. They have resorted to rationing as a means of control and libraries receive shortshrift. Since there is little local publishing the library must depend on foreign firms for its materials. Suddenly, even if it has the resources, the library finds that it is unable to spend them abroad. UNESCO, with its international coupon scheme, has sought to overcome foreign currency difficulties in purchasing books and other publications.

The failure on the part of most governments to formulate a national book plan has retarded development. The experts at Accra felt that the establishment of a Book Development Council, with representatives from the publishing world, libraries and interested government departments was the first step in creating the infrastructure neccessary to promote a strong publishing industry. The council would be responsible for drawing up a national plan and focusing national attention on the need for book development.

Just as governments have been slow to realize the importance of libraries in education, hence national development, they have been less than vigorous in their support of their publishing industries. The integration of these three elements, education, libraries and publishing, is essential for development. Publishing is a business but not just a business. Without the production of printed materials and their dissemination through libraries, book trade, etc. "it is impossible to create a contemporary manufacturing industry, to sustain widespread commerce, to modernize agriculture, to carry on efficient government, or to meet minimum educational needs."[161]

Although the publishing industry in West Africa is underdeveloped,there are some publishing enterprises. They fall into three categories; local branches of foreign firms (mostly British), indigenous private enterprise or institutional publishing operations, and state publishing houses.

A non-indigenous publishing house may be defined as a company in which a non-national parent corporation holds a majority ownership interest.[162] Unlike other non-indigenous businesses which sell, for example, the same toaster wherever they have established an outpost, the non-indigenous publisher, if he is to succeed, must tailor his product to suit the particular tastes and needs of his clientele. In order to understand these factors firms from overseas will often train nationals to become managers.

The presence of these firms has both good and bad effects on the local publishing industry and the country as a whole. Large overseas publishers usually have more ready capital than native companies. They can take risks and absorb losses which would ruin a smaller business. In many instances compensatory government support for local publishers is lacking. Accordingly, some feel that outside firms represent unfair competition. On the other hand, these international publishers provide a worldwide outlet for national literature and scholarship. Until local publishers gain sufficient strength these foreign publishers are sometimes the only substantial source of printed material.

Because of all the economic and social factors discussed earlier indigenous publishing is a hazardous undertaking. The fact that there are relatively few indigenous publishers further reduces their potential for changing detrimental government policies. In order to gain influence publishers and booksellers need to establish associations. These associations can work to promote conditions favorable to the industry by seeing that restrictions are kept to a minimum and that copyright laws are just to publishers and authors. They can consider the question of translation rights. Working together with printers and booksellers, the associations can examine the problems of distribution and paper supply. It is significant that the only two West African countries which have booksellers and/or publishers associations are the two countries which publish the most titles, have the widest distribution, and the greatest number of booksellers and publishers: Ghana and Nigeria.[163] The Ghana Booksellers Association is located in Accra. In Nigeria there is the Booksellers and Stationers Association of Nigeria at Ibadan, the Nigerian Publishers Association also at Ibadan, and the University Booksellers Association of Nigeria at Ile-Ife.[164]

The most successful indigenous houses are usually associated with large institutions such as the university presses mentioned earlier. It seems that the institutions can furnish the finances which the private individual has difficulty mustering.

The third category, state publishing houses, also includes the literature bureaus. Many of the state enterprises began as literature bureaus. Perhaps the most famous of the bureaus is the East African Literature Bureau but there are also some in West Africa. The Sierra Leone Provincial Literature Bureau promotes centralized local publishing, commissions many of its own manuscripts, operates its own printing establishment and handles most of its own distribution. The Liberian Information Service publishes readers in local languages. The Bureau of Ghana

Languages has produced some local language books for literacy campaigns and schools.[165] In Togo the National Committee for Culture was formed to promote both language and literature. It has publishing and bibliographic duties.[166]

Generally, the work of a literature bureau entails supplying textbooks for schools, some small publishing, encouraging authors, developing and cooperating with libraries, and supporting booksellers. These bureaus may be state owned but many are not; they are merely financed in part by the state.

State publishing houses constitute a major publishing force in West Africa. In some countries, Sierra Leone, Mali, Guinea, and Gambia, they are the only publisher.[167]

The state owned Ghana Publishing Corporation was established in 1965. It is manned by all-Ghanian trained personnel. The government of Ghana has realized the need for books: "to this end the production of useful and attractive books at attractive prices will have to be subsidized for some time to come."[168]

In Senegal the state is the majority shareholder in the national publishing house, Les Nouvelles Editions Africaines, founded in 1972. This organization has exclusive publishing rights for government material and the productions of the educational and cultural institutions under public authorities. It also has an option on the right to publish any other cultural or educational works.[169]

There are obvious problems with a state publishing system. Censorship or repression are always to be feared. It is desirable that a balance be struck between state and private indigenous publishing. This has yet to occur in West Africa.

. DISTRIBUTION

> It is often easier to travel
> between Dakar or Abidjan and
> Paris than between various
> African capitals.
>
> Philip Altbach "Literary
> Colonialism: Books in the
> Third World"

The obvious corollary to production is distribution. If production in West Africa appears weak, distribution is weaker still. The tendency to centralize the book trade in the capital cities is as much a sympton as a problem; these countries lack the infrastructure necessary to distribute printed materials. Consequently, of the four booksellers in Niger, all are located in Niamey, in Gambia all six bookstores are in Bathurst, five out of five bookshops are in the coastal city of Cotonou in Benin, and so the story goes.[170]

The infrastructure in this instance includes the poor transportation systems, absence of a network between booksellers and wholesalers, lack of opportunities for publicizing and advertising, and little or no bibliographic control. The low reader density and the great distances between settlements make the need for good distribution that much greater.

At Accra the experts agreed that libraries were a key factor in solving the distribution problem. They represent the link between the publisher and his public. They serve as markets for the publishers and suppliers for a population which, at present, cannot afford to buy their own books.

Some interesting attempts have been made to solve the distribution problem. The Midwest Book Depot in Nigeria was one solution which has been successful. The depot was set up in 1972 to act as a central purchasing agency which operates a cooperative acquisition scheme for the schools. The students pay a library fee of approximately three dollars. Seventy-five percent of this revenue is deposited with the depot which buys books and sells them back to the schools.

The remaining twenty-five percent of the fee goes to the maintenance of the school library. Thus schools have books and publishers have sales; all due to the efforts of the Midwest State Library.[171]

Another suggestion involves regional cooperation for distribution, with the smaller countries relying on the larger for some of their book needs.

XI. BIBLIOGRAPHIC APPARATUS

The third major problem facing libraries in West Africa is the absence and/or weakness of their bibliographical apparatus. This apparatus includes such things as national bibliographies, legal deposit and union lists. It is the means by which a country maintains a permanent record of its information resources, both old and new.

Earlier in the paper the bibliographic function of the national library was mentioned. It was also observed that many national libraries are such in name only. This is true, in part, because of their failure to produce national bibliographies. If there are few national libraries in West Africa, there are even fewer national bibliographies.

Nigeria, which publishes a weekly current bibliography with quarterly and annual cumulations, is the leader in West Africa in the area of current national bibliography.[172] The bibliography was begun in 1953 and is presently produced by the National Bibliographic Information Center, a part of the National Library in Lagos. The Center also publishes special and subject bibliographies.

In Ghana, which has no official national library, the Research Library on African Affairs has the responsibility for creating a national bibliography. Although a current national bibliography was not begun until 1968, Ghana has been relatively strong in the area of retrospective bibliography.

Another bibliography which is not produced by the national library appears in Sierra Leone. It is compiled by the Sierra Leone Library Board and tends to be more retrospective than current.

Among the French-speaking countries there is little bibliographic activity. The only national production is in

Senegal which has its Bibliographie du Sénégal: Répertoire des Archives. AIDBA has been interested in promoting bibliographic undertakings, but progress has been negligible.

The state of legal deposit was discussed in the chapter on legislation. Without a legal deposit law which is strictly enforced there is scant chance of creating a comprehensive national bibliography. Even if publishers realized the value of cooperation, reliance on goodwill alone would always result in lacunae and inaccuracies.

The major obstacles to bibliographic progress in West Africa are government and public apathy, lack of funds, and shortage of manpower.[173] The benefits to be derived from bibliographic control are well known to the librarian, but the arguments need to be presented to the proper authorities.

A good bibliography is an intrinsic part of a healthy publishing industry. Libraries cannot purchase books that they do not know exist. Publishers will not attract the sort of writers they desire if their publishing records are not readily available (what type of material they publish, what caliber). In developing countries, a national bibliography often serves as a sort of trade journal where no other exists.

For research into the reading tastes of a population or patterns of publication, a national bibliography is a source for statistical and factual information.

If there is to be library cooperation on either a regional or national scale a sound bibliographic system is essential. Interlibrary loan is impossible without it, as is shared purchasing. Foreign exchanges depend on the communication of bibliographic information.

Lastly, in purely political terms, a national bibliography is a source of national prestige. As a concrete proof of the cultural and intellectual productivity of a nation it is a means for building and strengthening national consciousness.

XII. THE MOST PRESSING PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL, PUBLIC, AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

The major problems, staffing, resources, and the need to develop a bibliographic apparatus, are clearly common to all types of libraries and they have been discussed in general terms. Yet all libraries are not alike; the school library differs from the public library which differs from the university library. Each has its own clientele and emphasis. Consequently, although they share problems, in any type of library one or two problems will tend to dominate. Before concluding, a mention of the preponderant concerns of school, public, and university libraries in West Africa would be appropriate.

School libraries are, as a rule, notoriously underequipped everywhere; in West Africa they are almost nonexistent. In those few fortunate schools where there is a small cupboard of books, or, which is serviced by a book deposit or bookmobile the biggest problem has been the proper management of these "libraries". Traditionally, those trained as teachers were not given any instruction in the operation of a school library. There was no need, for there were no school libraries. However, the situation is gradually changing and, increasingly, teachers find that they must double as part-time librarians.

The training of teacher-librarians is accomplished in two ways; in special required courses in the teacher training colleges, or through courses offered by the library association and designed explicitly for teachers. Such a program was created by the Nigerian Library Association, which formed a School Library Association expressly to organize and administer the program.

In both the formal programs and the courses given by the associations the teacher is instructed in book selection, library management and maintenance, and effective presentation (displays, reading clubs, etc.). Although these teachers may be given some technical training, the general feeling is that the technical processing is best handled centrally.

For public libraries the greatest challenge concerns the neo-literate. The problems of new literates have been discussed elsewhere, but the challenge involves more than the provision of appropriate materials. It requires that public librarians rethink their whole approach to service. They must assume an active tutorial role. They must experiment with new ways of stimulating interest in reading. In developing countries public libraries, in order to justify their existence to their government and the nation's educators, must do their utmost to keep the neo-literate literate.

There is a second challenge for public libraries. Compulsory education laws exist but, as we saw, the facilities are often lacking. Public libraries in most developed countries are aware of their responsibility to provide adequate children's services. How much greater is that responsibility in those countries where the public library may represent the child's only contact with a world outside his immediate experience?

Acquisition of materials is perhaps the most serious problem for university libraries. As enrollments increase and curricula expand university libraries are faced with a critical shortage of materials. Budgets have not grown apace. As of 1973 only 4.6% of the university budget was spent on libraries at Nigerian universities. This means that the book budgets for these libraries were proportionally very much lower than those of their American and British counterparts.[174] The amount and diversity of materials which these already reduced budgets can supply is further restricted by the need to provide textbooks. West African students simply can not afford to buy their own textbooks and government scholarships seldom include burses for books.

In many of the developed countries textbooks are not purchased by the library or, if they are, the expenditure represents only a small part of the total book budget.

The distance from the international markets slows the acquisition process. The librarian in West Africa may not learn of a new title immediately, and then inefficient postal and transport systems prolong the period between the ordering and the receipt of the new materials. This situation is especially unfortunate in regard to the second-hand market where speed can make the difference between acquiring or not acquiring a desired item.

The inadequacy of the bibliographic apparatus is particularly felt by the university libraries. Opportunities for exchange and resource sharing are drastically limited when there is no national bibliography or union catalog. In the developed countries exchange is one of the principal means of collection development and West African libraries are at a disadvantage because of their inability to participate fully.

If the university is to produce graduates capable of leading their nation into the twentieth century it must have a library equipped with the latest and best information in all fields. Collection development is the primary responsibility and difficulty of the West African university library.

CONCLUSION

This paper, in examining the situation of libraries in West Africa, has attempted to analyse the role and problems of libraries in developing countries. Although librarianship is said to be universal, it is also said that the library is an expression of the society by which it was built, in which it operates, and for whom it exists.

The "builders", the French and British colonialists, have had a deep and lasting influence on librarianship in West Africa. This influence is not necessarily the result of direct library activity, which in the case of the French was negligible. The colonial attitudes towards libraries have also affected the nature and extent of development. As a result, we have seen that the English-speaking countries of West Africa have made much greater progress.

The common characteristics of developing countries and their educational and library needs were discussed. The role of the library in development was considered and the importance of planning at the national level was emphasized. Once again it was observed that francophone West Africa has been less active in this area than its anglophone neighbors.

Throughout the paper references were made to resource sharing yet there was no discussion of regional cooperation. This is because, at present, such cooperation is rare. Aside from library education, little in the library world is done on a regional scale. Language differences are an impediment but nationalism and the general inadequacy of resources, taken collectively or individually, are perhaps more to blame for the failure.

Anyone who has attempted to do "long-distance" research on Africa will appreciate the difficulties encountered in the course of this paper. In fact, the researcher, gathering information from afar, experiences many of the same problems which West African libraries experience in collecting and organizing information right there on the scene; a paucity of material, inadequate bibliographic control, and a time lag. This last is the most frustrating because the researcher is always left with doubts; the nagging suspicion that everything has changed since the date of the most recent available article -- an article which may be five or more years old !

Slowly, the library situation in West Africa is improving. Greater numbers of people are being served and they are coming to understand the benefits to be derived from a good national library system. Admittedly, resources are scarce, but librarians have learned to argue their case well and governments are beginning to listen.

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